The Genteel Frontier: Westward Expansion of Womanly Refinement

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In memory of my father

Boyd Benjamin Carmichael
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Abstract

This dissertation explores the ways four white, upper-class, well-educated American women who lived or traveled in the Great Lakes region from the mid-1830s to the mid-1840s evoked and imposed standards of refinement and gentility in their works of travel writing as part of a strategy to urge other women to follow them to the West. Caroline Kirkland's A New Home, Who'll Follow? (1839), Eliza Farnham's Life in Prairie Land (1846), Margaret Fuller's Summer on the Lakes, in 1843 (1844), and Eliza Steele's A Summer Journey in the West (1841) are works whose authors were concerned about how well refined women could maintain domestic ideals in the primitive conditions of the Great Lakes region when faced with the effects of greater freedom, fewer models of ideal behavior, limited educational opportunities, and an influx of lower-class Americans and European-Americans. I argue that each of them identified the West as a place where courageous, capable, and refined women could exert appropriate, much-needed influence to bring about positive change, starting at home in the domestic sphere, resonating with higher levels of society, and ultimately influencing national character for the greater good. In their works, the four authors provided strategies for women like them from the Northeast to adapt and thrive on the frontier of continuous American civilization, while also considering marriage and family dynamics in the West, as well as what the United States' treatment of its indigenous population might indicate about the nation's moral compass. They showed that the combination of time, resources, and the influence of refined women held the promise of improved conditions and higher standards. My project fills a gap in scholarship about nineteenth century American women's travel writing by synthesizing and expanding upon others' approaches and considering four works by authors either largely overlooked by scholars (Steele) or not often considered in relation to one another (Kirkland, Farnham, and Fuller). Bringing their works together in one study that focuses on a particular time in a particular place allows for female perspectives about the frontier, the West, and settlement, offering a more complete and inclusive version of how the region was settled.

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Laura B. Bozeman

Table of Contents

Preface……..1

Chapter One: Introduction……...5

Chapter Two: The Genteel Gaze:

Asserting Affinity While Encouraging Others to Follow……...28

Chapter Three: Marriage, Family and Death on the Frontier……..63

Chapter Four: How Un-American:

Foreigners and "Savages" in the Upper Midwest…….104

Chapter Five: Conclusion……142

Works Cited…….149

Preface

When one considers American works of travel writing written about the Great Lakes region in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, it is unremarkable that the selections were distinctly masculine. Whether written by members of the United States military or civilian individuals, after all, the earliest American travel narratives were authored by men. These writings rarely depicted women at all, and when they did, as was the case with accounts of Lewis and Clark's Corps of Discovery and the Long Expedition, the women whom the authors wrote about were American Indians. This same tendency figures into historical accounts of the era.

The early settler history of the Great Lakes region was also masculine centric. For example, the first county of present-day Illinois, then part of the Northwest Territory, was St. Clair County, founded by General Arthur St. Clair in 1790, the same year he was appointed Territorial Governor. He named the county in honor of himself (Illinois 3). That same year, the first county in Michigan, Knox County, was also established and named in honor of a man.[1] European-American Women were undoubtedly present even in these early years, but they were not singled out for honor and acclaim. Evidently, a woman had to be truly exceptional, such as a person of royal blood, for such an honor. For example, Marietta, the first town established by United States troops on an expedition to build military outposts in the region, was named in honor of Marie Antoinette, the Queen of France, in 1788 (Greene 138).

The notion of the frontier captured the public's fancy. It was a place for bold men to accomplish extraordinary things and feats of derring-do. Whether the realities of the frontier met these expectations, people clung to a specific notion of what life was like out in the West. For example, as Henry Nash Smith notes in *Virgin Land: The American West as Symbol and Myth*, "The importance of the Lewis and Clark expedition lay on the level of imagination: it was drama, it was the enactment of a myth that embodied nature.

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[1] The Secretary of the Northwest Territory, Winthrop Sargent, did not bestow the honor on himself, but on General Henry Knox, a Revolutionary War hero who was then serving as the United States Secretary of War (Greene 335).

It gave tangible substance to what had been merely an idea, and established the image of a highway across the continent so firmly in the minds of Americans that repeated failures would not shake it" (17).

While the mythical status of the frontier endured, by the mid-1830s, the Great Lakes region was no longer such a place, as least not the way Frederick Jackson Turner defined it in his classic work, *The Frontier in American History*: "the outer edge of the wave — the meeting point between savagery and civilization" (3). The age of exploration in Illinois and Michigan, at least, had passed. The territories had been admitted to the Union in 1818 and 1837, respectively. Indian Removal Policy and the end of the Black Hawk War spurred rapid settlement. Rather than unknown terrain filled with "savages," these new states had been surveyed, mapped, and largely divided into parcels of land, up for sale.

Although the mystique of the frontier remained, the area represented a different type of frontier for European-American women who lived in the Great Lakes region as settlers or who traveled there as tourists in the mid-1830s to the mid-1840s: the frontier of refinement and gentility. Women like Caroline Kirkland and Eliza Farnham did not relocate there to endure an existence where they each were members of the only European American family for miles around, enveloped by untamed nature and fearing attacks by American Indians. Instead, they were surrounded by other settlers, and more families were arriving every day. In turn, women like Margaret Fuller and Eliza Steele did not travel to the Great Lakes region by horseback and frequent portages of their canoes, taking a year to complete an arduous and dangerous journey, camping along the way. Instead, they traveled by rail, by steamboat, and by stagecoach in comparative comfort, following an itinerary many others had traveled before them, and they mostly stayed in the homes of friends or at established places of lodging.

Genteel women like Kirkland, Farnham, Fuller, and Steele marveled at the beauty of the prairie and contrasted its expanses with the geography of the East coast. Certainly, some settlers still had to contend with the arduous tasks of clearing out woodlands, but Kirkland and Farnham's husbands were members of the professional class, and they did

not spend their days tilling the land. While Kirkland did mention the task of clearing stumps and "grubs" in the context of gardening, she advised her readers, "…your incipient Eden will afford much interest and comfort before this work [clearing remaining stumps and roots] is accomplished…" (134). For women of her class, these were minor inconveniences—they did not worry about the possibility of suffering crop failure if their lands were not cleared sufficiently. Fuller and Steele, in turn, journeyed to the Great Lakes region with friends or family, with the views of the prairie and the lakes appearing as sources of pleasure and contemplation, and their travel by river ways and lakes on steamboats offering opportunities to take in picturesque views.

For genteel settlers and travelers, theirs was a frontier of refinement, and their writings reflect their concern with seemingly trivial issues, like the furnishing of a house, to more profound ones, like the impact illness and death could have on families, the implications of the removal of American Indians, and the potential negative impact the influx of European emigrants could have on the region. They brought their genteel values with them to the frontier of refinement, and these values influenced how they saw the Great Lakes region, the nation, and the world. Their worldview was almost diametrically opposed to that of men. Male settlers and travelers certainly did not remark about the challenges of transforming a simple cabin into a home by planting flowers outside the front door (Fuller 58), using curtains to form partitions within (Farnham 127), applying "female taste" and "sylvan grace" (Fuller 58), and furnishing it with "comfortable carpets [and] chairs" (Steele 233). Not only were most men highly unlikely to notice such efforts, but they either would not care or would decide not to mention these inconsequential details.

Contemplating women writers' works of travel writing about the early years of settlement of the Great Lakes region aids in understanding the area's complex and rapidly evolving social landscape. Since new modes and means of transportation facilitated moving or traveling to the region, the population grew very quickly compared to the more gradual settlement of the Ohio River Valley. It was far less difficult to import goods and commodities from the East to Illinois and Michigan, compared to the early

days of settlement in Ohio and Kentucky, not only to furnish individual homes but also to construct rapidly the hallmarks of established communities, such as court houses, churches, schools, and theaters. For genteel, upper class women, the area had more allure, since it was possible for small communities to be transformed into fine towns or cities relatively quickly and easily.[2]

Most, if not all, scholarly studies about travel writing have only covered one of these four authors at a time, and not in the context of nineteenth century American women's travel writing of the Great Lakes region. Specifically, despite Steele's keen observations about the modes of transportation she used and the people she encountered, *A Summer Journey in the West* faded into obscurity and has only been considered in a few works about travel writing, Lori Merish's book *Sentimental Materialism* and two scholarly articles. In turn, while far more scholarly studies have focused on Kirkland, Farnham, and Fuller, these three authors have rarely been studied in relation to each other. Certainly, none of these four works has been considered in the context of how each author evoked and imposed standards of refinement and gentility as part of a strategy to urge other women to follow her to the West.

Considering these particular works by these particular authors helps to restore scholarly awareness of their voices and brings attention to a similar group of women's views of the American frontier, providing an alternative interpretation to far more generic male versions of settling the West. These women thought of the West as a frontier long after men deemed it settled and had shifted their focus to the Rocky Mountains and beyond. According to these four authors, the Great Lakes region was lacking in domesticity and refinement—it was a place in need of improvements to society and culture. By bringing these four authors together in one study that focuses on a particular time in a particular place, this project allows for female perspectives about the frontier, the West, and settlement and offers a more complete and inclusive version of how the West was settled.

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[2] See chapter ten of Richard Bushman's *The Refinement of America* for a discussion of how access to fine commodities increased the numbers of genteel settlers in the West.

Chapter One: Introduction

The Genteel Frontier: Westward Expansion of Womanly Refinement

Caroline Kirkland, Eliza Farnham, Margaret Fuller, and Eliza Steele wrote about their experiences as settlers or travelers to the Upper Midwest in the mid-1830s to the early-1840s. In their respective works, *A New Home, Who'll Follow?*, *Life in Prairie Land*, *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*, and *A Summer Journey in the West*, their statuses as white, middle to upper class women from the Northeastern United States influenced their perspectives of the region. Each author acknowledged that the rigors of life in the West, coupled with its rural culture, generally dissuaded genteel women from expanding their sphere of refinement into recently settled areas. That said, while each of them presented a vantage point to allow her readers better to understand the demands and rigors of the places where she settled or traveled, she also issued a call for action and encouraged women, through various forms of service and example, to challenge and expand their spheres of influence out in the West.

Background on Travel Writing

Travel writing is a subject of interest to scholars in many fields, including literary and cultural studies, history, anthropology, geography, and area studies. The study of travel writing experienced a "contemporary resurgence" (Campbell 261) when it emerged as a literary sub-discipline of post-colonial studies in the 1980s, following publication of Edward Said's foundational text, *Orientalism*, in 1978. By the early 1980s, anthologies of critical studies about travel writing became readily available, including *The Art of Travel: Essays on Travel Writing*, billed by its editor Phillip Dodd as "the first collection of critical essays to be devoted to British travel writing" (vii). At the same time, efforts to bring women's writings back into print and scholarly focus were ongoing. Annette Kolodny's *The Lay of the Land* and *The Land Before Her,* two works that are classics in travel writing studies, focused on the mythology of the American frontier and women's travel writing of the American West. In the first book, published three years before Said's *Orientalism*, Kolodny considered the colonization of the United States in the context of the symbolism of the land as Woman. She devoted part of her 1984 book, *The*

Land Before Her, to respond to Said's assertions within the context of gender studies. Seeking to identify what differentiated women's travel writing from men's, she argued that women viewed the frontier as a garden to be cultivated, rather than a virginal land akin to Eve's Eden. More scholars began writing about women travel writers after Kolodny published her works, and by the end of the decade, Jane Robinson's annotated bibliography *Wayward Women* had helped to raise awareness of works from sixteen centuries of women's travel writing. Even more scholarship followed, accordingly.

Over the past twenty years, the number of works of literary criticism addressing women's travel writing in part or in full has increased considerably. Sara Mills' *Discourses of Difference* and Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes*, both books grounded in post-colonial theory, are two additional classics of the field. Mills, who wrote from a feminist perspective, drew upon Foucault as well as Said.[1] The majority of her work focused on building a critical framework, but she included discussions of the writings of three European women who traveled to colonized countries from the late nineteenth to the early-twentieth centuries. Emphasizing the importance of context, she considered the ways women's travel writing focused on different subjects than men's and how women had different views of themselves and the indigenous people they encountered. In contrast, Pratt's focus was less restrictive, for she discussed both male and female travel writers in the context of the formation of a modern European identity, the world view that supported colonialism, and the construction of the "Other." Pratt also advanced the concept of "contact zones," namely, places where two (or more) cultures meet and share, albeit unequally, cultural material (7). This concept is useful when discussing various types of travel writing, including works about intra-national journeys, such as travels confined to the United States.

More recent works on travel writing by Susan Roberson (*Antebellum American Women Writers and the Road*), Susan Imbarrato (*Traveling Women*), and John Cox (*Traveling South*) attempted to expand the definition of travel writing in order to include

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[1] Mills notes that Said's theory "lack[s] an account of gender" (63).

diaries, journals, and works of fiction, such as the sentimental novel. For the most part, this effort was well received, but as Mary Bortnyk Rigsby commented in a review of Roberson's *Antebellum American Women Writers and the Road*, scholars should take care that their definition of travel writing is not "…so broadly inclusive [that] the theoretical frame ultimately creates a single large room where this interesting gathering of…writing mills about, with more freedom and mobility than unity of insight or productive friction" (181). Rigsby raised a valuable point, for too broad a definition of travel literature could potentially "dilute" the value of the identification of common themes and literary constructs. Beth Lueck's *American Writers and the Picturesque Tour* is a good example of a work whose author imposed limits to ensure a narrower selection of types of works united by a specific theme.[2] Of course, scholarly works about fiction can be useful when considering travel writing. Jane Tompkins' *Sensational Designs*, which focuses on works of fiction written by antebellum American women writers, is a good example. She discussed the ways these authors maneuvered within the conventions of gender and genre.

When considering works of travel writing written by 19th century American women, coupling Kolodny's assertion that women viewed the American West as a garden to be cultivated with the approaches that Mills and Lueck employed proves especially useful. Focusing on the ways women authors with key similarities write about what was, to them, the limits of continuous American civilization, provides a strong foundation for comparing and contrasting the ways the authors attempt to engage with and influence their target audience members. In the case of Kirkland, Farnham, Fuller, and Steele and their respective works, each author established that she and the members of her target audience were alike. Namely, they were comparatively well to do, educated, white women from the Northeast. Moreover, each used her travel writing not only to describe settling or traveling in the West, but also to advance a persuasive argument for her target audience, fellow genteel women.

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[2] Although her time period of seventy years is, perhaps, too large.

In this study, I build especially upon Kolodny's, Roberson's, and Tompkin's works about antebellum American women writers in order to analyze how four antebellum nineteenth century American women travel writers depicted the American West in consideration of their target audience members. Given the criticism that Roberson was not sufficiently narrow in her choice of works, I restricted my own selections to non-fiction books, though the travel writings I chose do occasionally contain poetry, semi-fictional, or fictional elements. Tompkins examined the ways female authors work within the conventions of gender and genre in works of sentimental fiction, but I believe her approach is also useful in the context of travel writing. I therefore adapted her approach to consider how my four selected authors evoked a particular aspect of gender norms (standards of gentility) and how they negotiated depicting the challenges of settling or traveling to the Upper Midwest while simultaneously encouraging other genteel women to follow their examples. In addition to Kolodny, Roberson, and Tompkins, I also found Cox's focus on travel writings about a particular region of the country (in his case, the South), particularly effective and decided to apply my focus on travel writings about a different geographic region of the country (in my, case the Upper Midwest). My project fills a gap in scholarship about nineteenth century American women's travel writing by synthesizing and expanding upon others' approaches and considering four works by authors either overlooked by scholars (Steele) or not considered in relation to one another (Kirkland, Farnham, and Fuller).

Selection of Primary Texts

The primary texts for this project are travel writing books with similar themes and subjects, written by women within the relatively short span of years between Euro-American settlement of the Upper Midwest and arrival of the railroads. These travel narratives, published between 1839 and 1846, contain reflections on domestic life of the frontier.[3] Two of the books focus on longer periods of settlement in the Upper Midwest

[3] For the purposes of this project, the term frontier refers to areas of settlement in the Upper Midwest that did not yet have railroad service. Kirkland viewed the part of Michigan where she lived as "on the outskirts of civilization" (8), and Farnham defined

(Kirkland and Farnham), and the other two focus on shorter, one-and-one-half or two-month-long circuit journeys from New York throughout the Great Lakes region and back (Fuller and Steele). Most of the longer critical works written about travel writings that describe journeys within the United States during the 18th and 19th centuries, including Susan Roberson's *Antebellum American Women Writers and the Road* and Jeffrey Hotz's *Divergent Visions, Contested Spaces,* compare and contrast authors from diverse backgrounds who traveled to different regions of the country over a greater span of years. Focusing, instead, on works written by female authors with similar backgrounds who settled in or traveled to the Great Lakes region during a single decade should better allow for comparing and contrasting the authors' observations and reactions about society and "others" while allowing for an assessment of how they aligned themselves with their target audiences and strived to persuade them either to settle in the West or to journey there.

Overview of Travel Writing about the Great Lakes Region from 1800 to 1840

The first four decades of the nineteenth century marked years of tremendous change in the Great Lakes region. The types of travel writing written about the area ranged from tales of exploration, to accounts of military operations and stories of missionary efforts, to tales of captivity, to stories of settlement, to accounts of tourism. The rapid changes in overarching topics and themes reflected the development of the area that is now the Upper Midwest of the United States.

Great Britain ceded the Northwest Territory to the United States following the Revolutionary War in the Treaty of Paris in 1783, but it was not until the end of the Northwest Territory War and the provisions of the Jay Treaty and that the United States

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where she lived in Illinois in terms of the prairie. Both women lived in areas undergoing development of towns and cultivation of the land. In contrast, Fuller and Steele both expected the Upper Midwest to be more exotic than they found it. Fuller amended her views based on her experiences. Steele, however, maintained her opinion that the region was quite primitive.

had control of the region.[4] Spain returned France's Louisiana Territory in 1800, and Napoleon Bonaparte sold it to the United States in 1803. President Thomas Jefferson then charged the Corps of Discovery with conducting an expedition to explore the new lands the United States acquired in the Louisiana Purchase. Jefferson's *Report to Congress*, published in 1806, and Nicholas Biddle's 1814 work, *The Journals of the Expedition under the Command of Capts. Lewis and Clark*, captured the American public's imagination.[5]

The War of 1812 established the modern-day border between the United States and Canada. Robert Hubach noted in *Early Midwestern Travel Narratives*, many Midwestern travel narratives addressed the war, since so many battles were fought in the region. He wrote that "The war was described by military personnel and civilians. General Hull's march to Detroit and his defeat there, General Hopkins' unsuccessful expedition against the Indians, and the massacre of Captain Heald's party were among the more popular events related" (45). In time, white settlements became more numerous in the Great Lakes region. Morris Birkbeck's *Notes on a Journey in America* and *Letters from Illinois* (1818) described his experiences emigrating from England to the United States and settling in frontier Illinois. The American public also continued to enjoy accounts of military expeditions to the Rocky Mountains that included travel through the Great Lakes region, such as Edwin James' *Account of an Expedition from Pittsburgh to the Rocky Mountains Performed in the Years 1819 and '20*.

Following President Andrew Jackson's signing of the Indian Removal Act in

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[4] Among its provisions, the Treaty of Amity confirmed the existing border between the United States and Canada and Britain surrendered control of its western military posts within the Northwest Territory (Articles II and IV).

[5] Prior to the Corps of Discovery led by Lewis and Clark, British explorer Jonathan Carver led an expedition to the upper Mississippi and the Great Lakes region. His account *Travels through the Interior Parts of North America in the Years 1766, 1767, and 1768* was so popular that it went through some twenty editions in the United States, Great Britain, and Europe. See Edward Gaylord Bourne's "The Travels of Jonathan Carver" for a discussion of the reception of this work.

1830 and the end of the Black Hawk War in 1832,[6] considerably more settlers relocated to Michigan and Illinois. The populations in these states grew rapidly. For perspective, in 1820, Michigan Territory had five counties, and according to US Census data, the population of Wayne County was 2,152. In 1830, the population had grown to 6,781, and seven additional counties had been established. By 1840, the population was 24,173, and six additional counties had been established. Kirkland and her husband and children moved to Wayne County in 1837, when the population was growing at a rapid pace. In contrast, while the area where Farnham settled (near Pekin in Tazewell County, Illinois) was far less populous and did not experience such explosive growth, its history again reflects the rapid settlement of the region. In 1820, Madison County covered a wide swath of western Illinois bordering "Military Bounty Lands" and had a total population of 13,550 (*Census for 1820*). Within six years, Pike, Fulton, and Peoria Counties had been formed out of parts of Madison County, and Tazewell County was formed out of Peoria County in 1827 (Illinois 6-8). The 1830 Census showed that it had a population of 4,716, and in 1840, the population of Tazewell County had grown to 7,221. Given that Father Jonathan Tharp became the first white resident near what became Pekin, Illinois in 1824 (Soady, 156)[7] and Chicago was founded on the shores of Lake Michigan in 1837, this is a striking and rapid increase in population.

The development of improved transportation methods and networks, coupled with larger numbers of settlers, contributed to increased tourism to the Great Lakes region by the mid-1830s. Sightseeing excursions became popular, especially following development of railways in the Northeast and use of steamboats on the Great Lakes and larger rivers in the region. Frances Trollope's *Domestic Manners of the Americans* (1832), Harriet Martineau's *Society in America* (1837), and Alexis de Tocqueville's *Democracy in America* (1839) are three works by foreign authors that underscore that the

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[6] In this era, the United States federal government displaced the majority of American Indians west of the Mississippi River through treaties.

[7] Fred Soady's "In These Waste Places" is a good overview of the early years of Pekin, Illinois.

Great Lakes region was evolving from a frontier to a rural culture by this time. People might still have referred to the area as the frontier or as "primitive," but conditions in the region were nothing like what settlers traveling on the Oregon and Bozeman Trails across the Rocky Mountains and beyond encountered.

The Authors and Their Works

Born in New York City in 1801, Caroline Stansbury Kirkland was the oldest child in her family, and her parents encouraged her "intellection development, self-sufficiency, interest in writing and instincts for reform" (Zagarell xiii). Kirkland attended and later taught at a school in Clinton, New York run by her paternal aunt, Lydia Mott. When her father died in 1822, she convinced her mother to relocate with her younger siblings to Clinton so she could support them. She and William Kirkland, a teacher at Hamilton College, married in 1828. They established a school for girls in Utica, New York before moving with their four children[8] to Detroit, Michigan in 1835, where they were co-leaders of the Detroit Female Seminary (Zagarell xiii-xiv). When interior Michigan opened up for settlement, Kirkland's husband wanted to take part in the venture, and the family moved there, where they founded Pinckney in 1837. Kirkland wrote about their experiences in *A New Home*, published in 1839. The Kirklands moved back to New York in 1843.

A New Home, Who'll Follow? is a detailed account of Kirkland's experiences living in Michigan in the late 1830s. Kirkland wrote in prose, but she started each of her book's forty-seven chapters with cited quotations in English, French, and Italian from many different types of literary works, including poetry and drama, and she occasionally included uncited quotations within her chapters, as well. She did not describe her journey from New York to Michigan, possibly because she and her husband were already living in Detroit when they decided to move to the interior of the state. Instead, she started her narrative during an expedition in which her husband scouted possible sites to establish a township. In her work, she took advantage of the familiarity several years' residence

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[8] One of whom, Sarah, died in Detroit after falling from a window (Roberson 161-2).

afforded her to describe, criticize, and even satirize the community, its surroundings, and the people she encountered. Although most of Kirkland's work was autobiographical, she included some longer passages that were semi-fictional, perhaps to advance her views more clearly, including an account of the early married life of a former student of hers with whom she reunited in rural Michigan. Her persona came through in her work as a likeable, upper class woman prone to evoking humor and, on occasion, satire. She conveyed her learned status through her frequent use of literary quotations and allusions. Overall, while Kirkland's pivotal role in the establishment of the town and her long-standing residence in the community certainly gave her far greater insight than most authors of travel writing could glean while passing from one region to the next, these qualities also exposed her to the full brunt of negative reception of her work by the people she wrote about and the resulting social ostracism. Her candor arguably makes *A New Home, Who'll Follow?* an unusual book for the era when it was written.

Eliza Burhans Farnham was born in Rensselaerville, New York, in 1815. The fourth of five children in her family, she was separated from her siblings after her mother died, moving to western New York in 1822 to live with her aunt and uncle. After nine years, she reunited with her sister Mary and her brothers, shortly before Mary married and moved to Illinois. Farnham was extremely well read, despite her formal education being limited to a year that her brother Kelly paid for her to attend a Quaker boarding school and a brief enrollment at the Albany Female Academy. In 1836, Farnham became engaged and traveled to Illinois to marry her fiancé, a lawyer named Thomas Farnham, after he moved near the community where her sister and her family lived. Farnham lived in Tazewell County, Illinois over a five-year period in the late 1830s. She and her husband returned to New York in 1840, and Farnham published *Life in Prairie Land* six years later (Hallwas xv-xx).

Farnham's *Life in Prairie Land* is a settler narrative based on the time she resided in the Upper Midwest. As John Hallwas noted in his introduction to a 1988 edition to the book, it is "a significant depiction of frontier Illinois from the perspective of an eastern immigrant" (xxiii). Consisting of two parts, with twenty-seven chapters in the first half

and twenty-five in the second, the book contains prose and the occasional line or two of uncited poems or songs. Since Farnham lived in Illinois for a number of years, she drew upon her experiences to write not only the region, but also of her family members and her neighbors. A keen observer, she wrote about both the highs and the lows of her life on the frontier, though her efforts to conceal the identity of the people she wrote about far surpassed Kirkland's.[9] Farnham's views on marriage were especially progressive, and she was particularly scathing of individuals she viewed as sexist. She also used harsh language when writing about people she found uncouth or slovenly. She occasionally assumed a strident tone, particularly when writing about issues she felt strongly about, such as the importance of sound housekeeping practices and the role and rights of women in marriage. While she also conveyed her love for her family, her disdain for some of her lower-class neighbors was clear. Nancy McKinney described Farnham's book as "…an example of the kind of literature that bridges gaps between travel literature, local color realism, and romantic iconography" (26). The structure of the book is a combination of travel narrative, autobiography, and extended essays, as well as a few semi-fictional passages and one fictional passage.

Sarah Margaret Fuller is far better known by contemporary scholars than Kirkland, Farnham, and Steele. The eldest child in her family, she was born in Cambridge Port, Massachusetts in 1810. Her father, a lawyer and later a member of the United States House of Representatives, personally supervised her education in a demanding classical curriculum of study more typical of what boys of her age would receive in that era. Simultaneously, her mother ensured she received training in household management. In addition to her studies at home, Fuller also briefly attended the Port School in Cambridge, the Boston Lyceum for Young Ladies, and the School for Young Ladies in Groton. Like Kirkland, she taught to help to support her family.

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[9] As Hurt noted in *Writing Illinois*, Farnham was perhaps *overly* cautious in taking care not to provide information that might result in identification of her locales and neighbors (27). Janet Floyd speculated that Farnham read *A New Home*, was aware of the negative reaction Kirkland encountered, and took measures to avoid a similar reaction to her book (13).

Specifically, after her father's death, she was a teacher at Alcott's Temple School in Boston. She later led "conversations" (discussions about academic matters with other women) and served as editor of Emerson's journal, *The Dial*. The summer of 1843, Fuller made a circuit of the Great Lakes with friends, travelling with them to Buffalo, New York; Niagara Falls; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; Chicago, Illinois; and Mackinac Island, Michigan before returning home. She prepared for this journey by studying information and paintings pertaining to the sites she planned to see. She is most well-known for her work, *Women of the Nineteenth Century*, first published in *The Dial* as "The Great Lawsuit" in 1843 and later expanded and published as a book in 1845 (Timko 290-9).

Fuller recounted her experiences during her summer's journey in *Summer on the Lakes*. Published in 1844, the book is part travel writing, part memoir. Its structure is the most unusual of the four works in this project—so atypical for the genre that Fuller's brother Arthur removed its "digressions" and revised it into a traditional travel narrative for *At Home and Abroad*, a collection of her works published in 1856, six years after her death. Fuller conveyed her impressions of the places she visited and the people she met with prose and poetry. She also included extracts from correspondence she received during her journey and a number of critical summaries of readings of books on Native Americans. Rather than exclusively focusing on her travels, Fuller also included summations of favorite works from Germany and a lengthy elegy to Mariana, a childhood friend.[10] In her three separate reflections on married couples, Fuller conveyed her progressive views on the roles of wives and the importance of partnerships between spouses. Fuller specifically wished to interact with American Indians during her time in the West, and she wrote about how she transgressed standards of behavior for a woman

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[10] Since Fuller learned of the death of Mariana when she ran into her aunt during her second brief stay in Chicago the summer of 1843, there is more of a connection between her elegy and *Summer on the Lakes* than one might at first assume, though her personal reminiscences are not from time she spent in the Great Lakes Region. She related what she learned from Mariana's aunt about her friend's life after she lost contact with her, as well as the circumstances of her death.

of her station in her efforts to learn more about the indigenous people who were still in the region. Overall, she used the most academic tone of the four writers, though she occasionally evoked personal associations with her experiences during her journeys. For example, she recalled a specific childhood memory of a captive eagle when she saw a caged eagle at Niagara Falls (8), and she expressed her disappointment when a canoe ride through river rapids was more sedate than thrilling (245-6). Her writing reflects the exceptional education she received, at times reading more like an academic essay or a field study. While her writing indicated she was optimistic about the region's possibilities, she never returned there herself. However, her progressive stances on women's equality, as well as her efforts to perform a type of ethnographic study of American Indians, helped to remove some of the stigma of the frontier as being wild and untamable.

Little is known about Eliza Steele compared to the other three authors. Born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1798, she was one of four sisters. Described as "well-educated and well-traveled," she was a deeply religious individual who was involved with her church and several charities in Brooklyn Heights, New York.[11] Whereas Kirkland, Farnham, and Fuller came from upper-class backgrounds, Steele came from the "prominent" Stansbury family. She was forty years old when she married Joseph Steele,[12] a successful businessman who emigrated from England to the United States (Wood 5). They never had children.

Like Fuller, Eliza Steele traveled through the Great Lakes region as a tourist.[13] In 1840, she and her husband visited upstate New York, parts of Michigan and Illinois, and

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[11] Steele was elected in 1844 for a term as the corresponding secretary of the Orphan Asylum Society of the City of Brooklyn (East Islip 5). She also served as treasurer of her church's Ladies Benevolent Society (American Home Missionary Society 261*)*.

[12] One of the most famous houses in the Clinton Hill district of Brooklyn, the Joseph Steele house, was custom built for the Steeles, who inhabited it part of each year from 1845 to 1853 (New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission 119).

[13] She differed from Fuller, however, in her capacity as an evangelist. She distributed tracts and other religious materials during her travels.

St. Louis, Missouri before returning home through Ohio, Virginia, and Maryland.[14] *A Summer Journey in the West*, published in 1841, is her account of their six-week circuit journey. In some respects, Steele's work would almost align more with a guidebook, for the information she included about the places she stayed and the forms of transportation she used was so specific she occasionally even included the cost of train and steamboat fares. The wealthiest of the four authors in this project, Steele more often evoked humor than shock or disgust when writing about primitive traveling conditions. She quoted works of poetry and drama, although she did not do so with the same consistency, as Kirkland, who started every chapter of her book with quotation(s). Steele was most passionate in her commentary about the challenges missionaries faced bringing Christianity to American Indians and ministering to individuals as varied as canal workers in Buffalo to congregations in rural Illinois. Her writing conveyed her personality as a wealthy, highly educated, deeply religious individual prone to apologizing when making especially harsh assessments. In contrast to the innovative structure of Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes*, Steele's work is a fairly straightforward travel narrative, presented as transcriptions of ten letters she wrote to an unknown recipient she addressed as "My Dear E—" and one last letter consisting of her reflections after her journey had ended. She encouraged other genteel women to travel to the West and to support missionary efforts when they did so.

Rationale

The reason for selecting these four authors and works is the many similarities that they share, as well as a few key differences. They were the same nationality, sex, race, and class. The education levels of Kirkland, Farnham, and Steele were approximately

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[14] Though Steele's journey occurred three years before Fuller's, and her work was published in 1841, I have placed discussion of her works last because hardly any critical writing exists about *A Summer Journey in the West*. Steele's work provides an opportunity to test the assessments made about Kirkland's, Farnham's, and Fuller's works, as well as arguments found in critical writings about 19th Century American women's travel writing, in general.

equivalent.[15] All four women were raised in the Northeastern part of the country (New York for Kirkland, Farnham, and Steele and Massachusetts for Fuller). As white, middle- to upper-middle-class women with similar educational backgrounds,[16] the authors' similarities serve as a foundation for comparing and contrasting their works. Specifically, one can consider how their personal identities affected their core messages about one specific region of the country at a specific point in westward expansion. Each author wrote at least one other book; furthermore, Kirkland, Fuller, and Farnham also published articles and reviews. Of their various works, *A New Home, Life in Prairie Land, Summer on the Lakes*, and *A Summer Journey* are, arguably, the best choices to study as a grouping. Steele did not publish any other travel writing, so *A Summer Journey* is the only suitable choice of her three books; moreover, while Kirkland, Farnham, and Fuller did publish other travel writing, *A New Home*, *Life in Prairie Land*, and *Summer on the Lakes* were their first respective works—making them better choices to compare with *A Summer Journey*. In addition, *A New Home*, *Life in Prairie Land*, and *Summer on the Lakes* all focus on the Upper Midwest. Although Kirkland published other works about her life in Michigan, including *Forest Life* and *Western Clearings*, these books contain differences in content and style—perhaps a response to the negative reaction of her neighbors to her writing—and they are, therefore, not the best choices for comparison with the other authors' books.[17] The later travel writings of Kirkland,

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[15] Fuller's education was more like the schooling young men received in this era.

[16] All four authors received educations that included instruction in foreign languages, and they all attended female seminaries for a time, Although as Stephanie Palmer notes in *Together by Accident*, Kirkland's education was "unusually wide and deep for a woman" (45). In addition, Fuller, admittedly, stands out for the education she received from her father, as well as for her experience as the first woman granted access to Harvard College's Library.

[17] Unfortunately, Kirkland provided so many details in *A New Home* that her real-life neighbors soon recognized themselves—despite her changing the name of the town she and her husband helped to establish in Michigan from Pinckney to Montacute, writing under the pseudonym Mrs. Mary Clavers, and taking care not to refer to people by their real names. Her subsequent works about the West did not provide nearly as much detail or commentary about society or regions.

Farnham, and Fuller were about different regions of the United States or Foreign countries (England, California, and Europe, respectively). Therefore, the four works for this project are the best selections when considering how the authors' identities and core beliefs influenced what they wrote about their travel experiences.

Recurring Themes:

Settlers versus Travelers, The Domestic Sphere, and Women's Role

The amount of time each of the four authors were in the Upper Midwest had an impact on her travel writing. Certainly, all of them noted instances where standards of gentility were lacking, such as encounters with people who did not dress well, had poor vocabularies and even poorer elocution, and who did not observe social conventions commonly accepted as good manners, but Kirkland and Farnham addressed these experiences in more detail than Fuller and Steele did. Compared to them, they seem especially concerned about the nascent state of civilization on the frontier. Perhaps Kirkland and Farnham discerned the differences between the standards of the Northeast and the frontier more acutely because as settlers they spent years, rather than weeks, in the region. Since they moved to the Upper Midwest rather than simply passing through it as tourists, they attempted to integrate into their respective communities, Montacute, Michigan, and Pekin, Illinois, in ways that they need not have bothered as travelers. Furthermore, they lived on the prairie with their families, so their focus naturally included their spouses and children rather than just themselves. However successful or unsuccessful their efforts were, the extra time they spent in Michigan and Illinois undoubtedly enabled them to develop considerable knowledge about the settlements where they lived and the residents of these areas.[18] By writing about how they had survived the challenges associated with relocating to the frontier and noting that the conditions there were gradually improving, through construction of better roads, homes

[18] Perhaps their added knowledge and sense of being part of the community, rather than outside observers, also made Kirkland and Farnham feel they were entitled, in a way, to provide specific commentary about life in the Upper Midwest to their target audience, people who resided in the Northeast.

and public buildings, the arrival of greater numbers of school teachers, ministers, and doctors, and the influx of various types of settlers, they strived to encourage other middle and upper class women to follow them to the Upper Midwest and to continue efforts to "civilize" the region.

In contrast, Fuller's and Steele's experiences in the Upper Midwest were far more transitory. If they, too, had settled in the Upper Midwest, maybe they would have provided similarly detailed discussions; however, as individuals undertaking summer circuit journeys, their experiences were fleeting but still insightful and challenging. On occasion, they expressed themselves rather bluntly when they assessed their experiences or described the people they met. Perhaps because they were not members of the communities they visited, they also felt a great sense of freedom to voice their views more freely. While they focused far more on the journey itself, with its difficulties, challenges, and pleasures, than the glimpses they had into each community they encountered, Fuller and Steele still raised comparable concerns to Kirkland and Farnham and conveyed the message that frontier was in need of the influence of genteel women.

Each book contains commentary about the important role women play in "civilizing" the frontier. A belief that the four authors shared was that women should use their influence in the domestic sphere, in the family, to improve society at its most basic structure and that this grassroots effort could eventually have a considerable impact on society as a whole. In this respect, their views aligned with the conventional wisdom of the time. Scholars who have focused on the cultural role of domesticity in the antebellum United States have shown that most Americans of this period identified the domestic sphere as the place where women exerted the most influence on society. As Nancy Cott noted in her book, *Bonds of Womanhood*, the era's emphasis on domesticity contributed to the development of a sense of the collective importance of women and their shared destiny. The idea of true womanhood, coupled with domesticity, formed a type of social ethic where people considered women who were fulfilling their traditional roles as wives and mothers essential to "the transmission of culture, the maintenance of social stability, and the pursuit of happiness" (Cott 2). Brigitte Georgi-Findlay expanded on this idea in

the context of westward expansion when she wrote in her book, *The Frontiers of Women's Writing*, that "The ideal of domesticity, read in a context of empire building, also functions as an instrument for imposing cultural and social control and order upon 'disorderly' classes of the West" (29-30). While Kirkland, Farnham, Fuller, and Steele did not focus specifically on appropriation of contested lands in their works, they did discuss the process of community formation and the important role women played in transforming individual homestead settlements into villages, towns, and cities—a refining step in empire building. Within the framework of topics considered to fall under the purview of women, such as domestic matters, they identified what aspects of community were crucial for the establishment of greater society on the prairie.

Critical Works

Fuller's *Summer on the Lakes* has received the most scholarly attention, followed by Kirkland's and Farnham's travel writing selections. In contrast, there are very few works with other than brief mentions of Eliza Steele's *A Summer Journey in the West.*[19] Relatively recent reissues of *A New Home* and *Life in Prairie Land*, including introductions by Sandra Zagarell and John Hallwas, respectively, appear to have increased interest in Kirkland and Farnham's writing. Lori Merish considered *A New Home* in the context of middle-class economic consumption and nineteenth century ideals of womanhood, whereas David Leverenz wrote from a psychoanalytic perspective about the ideologies of manhood found in Kirkland's work. He asserted that Kirkland conveyed that women were morally and emotionally superior to men partly through the way she depicted members of the opposite sex. In contrast, Stephanie Palmer considered the ways Kirkland and Farnham depicted interactions between people from different

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[19] The few scholarly writings about Steele usually focus on her observations of modes of transportation and the prairie. Wood retraced Steele's summer journey in his article, "In the Footsteps of Eliza Steele." providing information about not only the places she visited and what they are like today, but also her life. He exhausted the resources of the Brooklyn Historic Society and its *Brooklyn Eagle* archives in searching for information about her. Will Macintosh's "Ticketed Through: The Commodification of Travel in the Nineteenth Century," focused on modes of transportation.

classes or regions, drawing upon a combination of literary, historical, geographical, and anthropological theorists in her discussion. In turn, Hurt approached Farnham's *Life in Prairie Land* from a cultural studies perspective, analyzing how she conveyed a sense of the landscape of the prairie to her readers, her initial dismay at the "possibility of constructing a viable culture in such emptiness" (4), and ultimately, the sense of hope and potential she identified with it. Writing about Fuller, Nicole Tonkovich's considered the contrast between her unusual education and upbringing and how, in some ways, she prescribed domesticity for other women in *Summer on the Lakes* while concurrently highlighting her own professionalism. Considering the specific ways Fuller benefited from the inherit mobility of travel, Cheryl Fish argued that the journey enabled her to step outside of the domestic sphere in order to develop her own "mobile subjectivity"—especially when she interacted with American Indians in the cultural contact zone of the West. Jeffrey Steele used a combination of biography and cultural criticism in *Transfiguring America* when he analyzed the entirety of Fuller's writings and how she paired myth making with cultural critique; he also applied a psychoanalytic approach when considering the impact Fuller's father had on her works. And Georgi-Findlay applied a post-colonial approach to consider the ways "women's accounts are implicated in expansionist processes at the same time that they formulate positions of innocence and detachment" (xi). Writing about Steele, in addition to Kirkland and Farnham, she asserted that the authors provided social guides, of sorts, for the communities they encountered, while at the same time depicting the prairie as untouched natural landscape. Overall, scholarly writings about these four authors have primarily employed biographical, feminist, and cultural studies approaches.

While each of these critical works has informed my study, I found Leverenz's and Merish's approaches particularly useful, for they each specifically considered how Kirkland evoked gentility. By assessing their criticism of Kirkland and then applying aspects of their respective approaches to the works of my other three selected authors, I build upon their research. Furthermore, in the course of conducting my study, I found Merish's and Palmer's consideration of the ways Kirkland considered her target audience

and depicted people from other regions of the country helpful not only in the context of *A New Home*, but also in the context of my other three selected authors' works. Fish's concept of "mobile subjectivity" was also particularly useful when I considered the ways the four authors viewed "others" and specific instances when they had to or chose to transgress standards of gentility in their years living in the West or during their travels there. Her emphasis of the impact mobility can have on author's views fits well with the recurring themes of settlers versus travelers, the domestic sphere, and the role of women found in my four authors' selected works.

Chapter Two Overview:

The Genteel Gaze: Asserting Affinity While Encouraging Others to Follow

By first acknowledging the rustic conditions and primitive culture, the four authors established credibility with their readers, and they showed that they had similar standards. They evoked not only shock, but also humor, when describing their experiences in a region many genteel women might consider untamed. That said, they also gave their readers a taste of what they could expect life on the prairie in new settlements to be like (for example, few or no servants, (initially) primitive housing, and limited ability to comply with Eastern standards of decorum). The authors acknowledged that the prairie/frontier was, in some ways, still a demanding location, for until recently it had primarily been the domain of men and the most unrefined members of society.

The authors' experiences as settlers or travelers influenced their core messages. As settlers, Kirkland and Farnham both showed how a positive attitude and a flexible approach yielded rewards when establishing a home for one's family in the West. They discussed how it was possible to improve housing conditions, and they showed how an area's cultural life improved as more people settled there—particularly when genteel women were there to exert appropriate influence. In contrast, as travelers, Farnham and Steele acknowledged that the prairie was untamed, from a genteel standpoint, but they also conveyed that it was not nearly as "wild" as conventional wisdom held. In so doing,

they demonstrated that genteel women could travel there, as they did, and not risk being abducted by Indians or becoming slatterns. Although each of them had to make allowances and concessions, neither of them had to forego all of their standards for dress, cleanliness, and social interaction during her summer circuit journeys.

When the four authors wrote about how poorly (or, in certain instances, how well) the people they met who lived on the frontier were able to meet Northeastern standards for genteel behavior, they helped their readers to understand more fully how primitive conditions were in the region and the considerable importance of the role that women played in improving social standards in the Upper Midwest. Each author was concerned with what type of education was appropriate for women in the region. All of them provided sound advice for women planning to come to the area for stays longer than visits. They were concerned with advising other women on how they should best prepare themselves and their daughters for a more rugged existence. They showed that women could expect to encounter obstacles and limitations in the attainment of genteel behavior in the Great Lakes region, but the combination of time, resources, and the influence of refined women held the promise of improved conditions and higher standards.

Chapter Three Overview: Marriage, Family and Death on the Frontier

The four authors each discussed family structure and dynamics in their works and commented on the ways relocating to the frontier impacted on families and, especially, women, who occasionally struggled to maintain control of the domestic sphere. To varying degrees, they conceded that the challenges of life on the frontier sometimes required women of their social standing to overlook class barriers. Certainly, when they wrote about marriage, illness and death they aligned with the types of topics the popular culture of their era deemed suitable for female authors.[20] Writing about the domestic sphere, according to Carl Thompson in his book *Travel Writing*, was "an important means by which women could claim an authority unavailable to men" (185). To varying degrees, however, all of them addressed conventional feminine subject matters as an

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[20] All of them comment on marriage as part of the domestic sphere—an area of writing considered part of women's purview.

entrée for further reflections on the social boundaries of the frontier and the institution of marriage.

In the course of writing about their experiences in the Upper Midwest, Kirkland, Farnham, and Fuller each advanced feminist views and, in some cases, novel egalitarian social ideals when they considered marriage in the context of the frontier.[21] Essentially, they took a topic that pertained to the domestic sphere and connected it to the public sphere to address larger concerns. While Kirkland was somewhat circumspect—though she clearly esteemed marriages that were partnerships—Farnham and Fuller specifically expressed progressive views about the roles of husbands and wives and made assertions that challenged the status quo, using their books to consider the rights of women and to advocate for change. Fuller's observations of women's lot in the places she traveled partly inspired her to write *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. Steele's views on marriage, in contrast, were more traditional; apparently, she endorsed the Cult of Domesticity, or True Womanhood.[22]

Each of the four authors also reflected on the impact of death on families, and to an extent, all of them considered in what ways death had a similar or different impact for those people living on the frontier compared to individuals living in well-developed locations. Regardless of the individual approaches these authors took with their discussions of marriage and family dynamics, their comments serve as indications of their greater concerns about the role of women, as well as their anxieties about the possible negative impact westward expansion could have on the country if the region continued to develop without sufficient numbers of refined women to exert appropriate,

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[21] Of note, Fuller was the only unmarried author of the group, but she advanced clear views on the roles of husbands and wives in marriage. Kirkland and Steele settled in the Upper Midwest or traveled there with their husbands. Farnham journeyed to Illinois with her brother to wed her fiancé.

[22] Defined by Barbara Welter in her classic essay, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860" (1966) as "four cardinal virtues—piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity" (152).

much-needed influence.[23]

Chapter Four Overview:

How Un-American: Foreigners and "Savages" in the Upper Midwest

During the years that they lived on the frontier or the weeks they traveled there, the four authors each encountered people of different races or nationalities. Carl Thompson's remarks that "…travel accounts often illuminate the mental maps that individuals and cultures have of the world and its inhabitants, and the larger matrix of prejudices, fantasies and assumptions that they bring to bear on any encounter with, or description of, the Other" (136)[24] certainly apply to each author's writing. The authors' self-identities and social statuses influenced their travel writing—in this case, the way they depicted these people as "other." Whether interacting with European emigrants and American Indians or simply observing them from afar, the authors were conflicted in how they viewed them. They grappled with the question of what rights, if any, these people had to be in the Upper Midwest. Furthermore, the ways they portrayed themselves in relation to these people, as well as other white, middle-to-upper-class, educated European-American women, reinforced what they evidently considered the ideals for women on the frontier.

Kirkland and Fuller both demonstrated a tendency to judge European emigrants not only according to standards of gentility but also in terms of how well they appeared to support American values, such as the democratic ideals of freedom and equality. They considered European emigrants as possible negative influences on the society and culture

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[23] Halverson noted that many female authors "render the home as a platform for female autonomy, resistance, and imagination rather than sacrifice and obligation," adding that "By playing with domestic and textual conventions, they reconfigure their western settings…[as] liberating and challenging terrains where in which new versions of female individuality and subjectivity can be crafted" (4).

[24] As Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin note in *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, "…many critics use the spellings ['Other' and 'other'] interchangeably, and Thompson appears to do so in this quotation. I use "other" for the purposes of this project, referring back to Thompson's definition of "othering" namely, "the processes and strategies by which one culture depicts another culture as not only different but also inferior to itself" (132-3).

of individual prairie communities. They were also concerned about the impact these individuals could have on national character and cultural values. Were greater numbers of genteel American women to move west, they reflected, they could counteract these detractors. In contrast, Farnham and Steele each had very little to say about European emigrants.[25] Farnham simply noted that frontier might provide the space and suitable conditions for "The pent up famishing legions of Europe" (400-8). Steele, in turn, remarked that German and Swiss emigrants might benefit the nation through their example of "industry, economy and patience" (83); however, she later speculated that a charity should raise monies to relocate poor European emigrants on the east coast westward across the Alleghenies (263). She apparently believed that lower-class farming families should only settle on the frontier, for they certainly did not belong in the East.

In their discussions of American Indians, three of the four authors considered what the nation's treatment of Indians could indicate about the country's moral compass. Rather than discussing the overall fate of the American Indians, Kirkland reserved her commentary for accounts of her personal interactions with the few Native individuals she met during the years she lived in Michigan. In contrast, Farnham, Steele, and Fuller specifically considered their fate. When condemning the United States government for its treatment of its indigenous people, Farnham's views were as pointed as those she expressed about marriage. In contrast, Steele's comments reflected her religious devotion. While considering what God's will might be for the American Indians, she speculated that the country might one day suffer His wrath for the wrongs committed against these people. She and Fuller both suggested that efforts should be taken to preserve historic sites, cultural artifacts, and human remains of anthropological value. Once more, the authors used their works to encourage other women like them to settle in or travel to the frontier to help to improve those aspects of life there that were most in need of improvement.

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[25] Given Steele's husband was English, she had strong incentive not to criticize emigrants from his country.

Chapter Two: The Genteel Gaze:

Asserting Affinity While Encouraging Others to Follow

The ways Caroline Kirkland, Eliza Farnham, Margaret Fuller, and Eliza Steele emphasized their status as genteel, upper class, educated women during the years they lived in the West or the weeks they traveled there not only highlighted the differences between the Great Lakes Region and the Northeastern United States but also served as a means for the authors to establish credibility about the veracity of their writings and to align themselves with their target audience members: Women like them back in New York and New England. By discussing the challenges they encountered during their years as settlers or their weeks as travelers, the four authors demonstrated the ways it was possible for women from the Northeast to maintain their gentility while adapting to circumstances and helping to improve conditions in the region. Each of them presented a vantage point to allow her readers better to understand the demands and rigors of the places where she settled or traveled, while also issuing a call for action that encouraged genteel women, through various forms of service and example, to challenge and expand their spheres of influence out in the West. A starting point for this discussion is a consideration of the ways Caroline Kirkland evoked standards of gentility in her account of the challenges she encountered as a settler residing in rural Michigan.

In *A New Home, Who'll Follow?*, Caroline Kirkland described in detail many of the challenges she encountered as a settler in rural Michigan. Early in her book, she related the difficulties she had hiring a young woman from the local area to assist her with household duties and childcare. Her account not only provided insight into her views of the various people she encountered in Michigan but also highlighted her status as an upper class, genteel women. Moreover, her remarks about the challenges she encountered finding domestic help in Michigan also served as practical advice for other women like her who might be considering relocating there or to other parts of the Great Lakes region. Kirkland explained that she opted not to bring any servants with her when relocating to Michigan. She did so partly because friends back home had suggested that

there would be "plenty of good farmer's daughters ready to live with [her] for the sake of earning a little money" (67). Unfortunately for her, their assumptions proved unfounded. Back East, many people—particularly Irish immigrants--were willing to work as servants. These individuals were plentiful compared to communities located in the Great Lakes region, where a more egalitarian spirit prevailed.

As Kirkland described the challenges she encountered finding and retaining hired help for domestic work, she demonstrated that when she moved to Michigan she had distinct views on class demarcations and appropriate and inappropriate behavior for servants.[1] These views aligned with those of her family and friends back East—the members of her target audience. Lori Merish contends in *Sentimental Materialism* that by "…locating herself within a community of 'civilized' readers by shaping sympathetic identification, …[Kirkland] repeatedly performs her civil subjectivity [writing from the perspective of a genteel Easterner], and invites her readers to do the same, by invoking and disavowing an identification with 'uncivilized' frontier inhabitants" (96). Merish's assertion certainly seems accurate when considering the ways Kirkland depicted her challenges in procuring assistance, though it appears that she ultimately grew to appreciate, if not identify with, many of her neighbors in the West. When she asked her new neighbors after she arrived in Michigan who might be willing to come to work for her, she learned she would not be able to employ anyone to help around the house for any period other than short term. Typically, young women in the area were willing to hire out for work only for the amount of time it would take for them to earn money for some particular item they wished to purchase, such as a new dress, or to engage the services of the doctor to care for an ill family member (67-8). As Kirkland explained, she was dismayed by the poor manners of the various women who agreed to work for her. Whether they ate foods intended only for family or guests (68), became offended when not invited to join Kirkland when company called (Ibid.), exhibited undue familiarity

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[1] Georgi-Findley explains in *The Frontiers of Women's Writing*, "…while the settlers draw on republican assumptions of equality, the eastern newcomer expects relations of service and dependency" (32).

(76), or drank "the remains of the tea from the spout of the tea-pot" (87), none of the individuals she hired met her exacting standards for hired help. When the local school teacher came calling to offer her services in exchange for room and board, Kirkland was appalled when the woman commenced to smoke inside the parlor and spit into the hearth (95). Kirkland did not hire her. Clearly, she had different standards for social interactions and delineation of socio-economic classes than her neighbors did. Her observations helped her audience members to understand what types of challenges they might encounter as settlers when hiring domestic help.

Initially, at least, Kirkland evidently viewed someone's willingness to work as a servant as an indicator of "an inferior station" (68). In contrast, she learned that her neighbors considered it as a means to an end. Over time, Kirkland's opinions changed to align more closely with her new neighbors. She exercised less "civil subjectivity" after she had learned how to perform household duties that she formerly considered servants' work. She wrote that "It was not until I actually became the inmate of a log dwelling in the wilds, that I realized fully what 'living all in one room' meant," contrasting her former "floating visions of a home in the woods" with the challenges of actually making a cabin (or later, a simple frame house) into a home (83). While she continued to experience shock and dismay at the attitudes of many of the women she hired to assist her in completing domestic work, she began to find more humor in these situations.

Perhaps, as David Leverenz contends in *Manhood and the American Renaissance*, Kirkland's "…wit depends on a rigorous application of class standards" and "[w]hat they [the residents of Montacute] see as her pride, she sees as her class superiority" (151-2).[2] Another possible interpretation is that Kirkland evoked humor in her descriptions of her experiences less as an "application of class standards" than as a demonstration of how far her own attitude evolved after residing for more than a year in Michigan as a settler and learning how to care for her family in a region characterized by rustic conditions and a

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[2] It is not surprising that Kirkland's neighbors were angered when they read *A New Home*, for they easily recognized themselves and others from Pinckney, Michigan in Kirkland's writing and did not like what she had to say (Zagarell xvi-xvii).

comparatively primitive culture.

Kirkland's depiction of her experiences and her reactions helped to demonstrate to her readers that if she could change her attitude toward servants and make adjustments to her household routine, other genteel women could do so, too. Although she acknowledged that at first she considered having a maid "an essential point of domestic comfort" (68), she explained that her attitude changed over time. Shortly after she began writing in her book about the challenges she first encountered in finding domestic help, Kirkland noted, "I have learned a better philosophy since I find no difficulty now in getting such aid as I require and but little in retaining it as long as I wish though there is always a desire of making an occasional display of independence," adding that the key was to consider a person's willingness to work as "a favour." She reflected that she still had "city habits" when she first moved to Michigan[3] and soon overcame her "silly pride" (67-8). Her period of residence in the Great Lakes Region helped her to learn to adopt a more flexible approach in matters of household management, when circumstances warranted. She also learned that gentility was not, in and of itself, necessarily an indication of ethics and integrity.

Kirkland cautioned that one should consider more than a prospective friend's class and gentility in the West, for an individual one might have shunned in the Northeast could have a far better character than a more refined person. As she demonstrated, she experienced disappointment and suffered embarrassment when she befriended a woman who relocated to the region whom she perceived was of similar socio-economic status, education, and temperament. She was extremely excited when the Rivers, a recently married couple, relocated to the area, noting, "…I was so much pleased with the idea of having a neighbour whose habits might in some respects accord with my own…" (97). The two women ultimately formed a friendship that Kirkland summed up with the simple

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[3] Kirkland's full statement was as follows: "Since living with one for wages is considered by common consent a favour, I take it as a favour; and, this point once conceded, all goes well. Perhaps I have been peculiarly fortunate; but certainly with one or two exceptions, I have little or nothing to complain of on this essential point of domestic comfort" (67-8).

phrase, "I had a neighbour" (109). Certainly, there were other families who lived near the Kirklands, and Kirkland often used the term "neighbour" to refer to them, but Mrs. Rivers was one of only two ladies, the other being Mrs. Danforth (129), who had all the necessary qualities Kirkland deemed necessary for classification as a close friend of hers.[4] As she eventually learned, however, her new friend was a kind, honest woman, but the same could not be said for Mrs. Rivers' husband. Perhaps in her eagerness for companionship, she overlooked warning signs about the man that she would not have ignored back East.[5] In the end, Kirkland conceded that she was perhaps too hasty when forming the friendship. She explained that during the couples' period of residence, Mr. Rivers orchestrated a banking scheme, defrauding numerous settlers before moving back East (97, 214). Although Kirkland had noted from the first that Mr. Rivers showed signs of dissipation (109), she acknowledged that she overlooked his character in her eagerness to befriend his wife—ultimately, a poor decision, given Kirkland's husband's pivotal role in establishing the township and the importance of reliable banking institutions to the endeavor's success.[6] She learned that simply being of the same class did not necessarily mean someone would be completely compatible as a friend, even on the frontier—sound advice for other genteel women who might follow her to settle in Michigan. Her account served as a cautionary tale for future upper class settlers from the Northeast.

In certain situations, Kirkland was not afraid to paint herself in a humorous light

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[4] Kirkland's descriptions of the efforts she undertook to help Mrs. Rivers adapt to life in Montacute also served as practical advice for her readers who might choose to relocate to the West. For example, Kirkland encouraged her new friend to change from "neat home-dress" into white attire when they attended a wedding, in order to pay honor to the newlyweds as well as to avoid social scorn. Mrs. Rivers was concerned people might feel she was trying to "outshine" them, but Kirkland pragmatically noted that she and her new friend "…were in more danger of that other and far more dangerous suspicion of undervaluing our rustic neighbours" (111-2).

[5] Kirkland remarked that her first impression of Mr. Rivers was poor. His "…face shewed but too plainly the marks of early excess" and he struck her as indifferent to his spouse (109).

[6] Stephanie Palmer notes that Kirkland "…reveals the inhumane side of capitalism and westward expansion" (45) in *A New Home*, "[making] prescient points about the capitalist speculation that contuse to ruin investors" (47).

or to include descriptions of situations where she admitted that she misjudged others. In this respect, Merish's assessment of *A New Home, Who'll Follow?* does not work well, for in instances such as below, Kirkland's writing contains what might be termed "civil objectivity," in addition to "civil subjectivity." She described her experiences with enough detail to help other genteel women who might one day settle in the region to avoid making the same mistakes she did. For example, Kirkland related that when she first arrived in the frontier regions of Michigan, she was inappropriately dressed and wearing slippers more suitable for a social call out East than the rigors of making one's way across boggy ground.[7] She and her husband reached an impasse and were considering retreating and attempting a different route, when a frontiersman approached. Kirkland described him as "a man in an immense bear skin cap and a suit of deer's hide [who was] as wild and rough a specimen of humanity as one would wish to encounter in a strange and lonely road at the shadowy dusk of the evening" (13). To her surprise, the man, who spoke broken English with a French accent, readily extended aid, helping the Kirklands to continue their journey. She noted, "This instance of true and genuine and generous politeness I record for the benefit of all bearskin caps leathern jerkins and cowhide boots *which ladies from the eastward world may hereafter encounter in Michigan*" (13, italics mine). She did not want future genteel settlers to make the same erroneous assumptions she did. Later, Kirkland provided another example of rugged dress that disguised a man's true nature, remarking that the town's doctor was from Europe and highly educated, though one would not know it based on his appearance. Kirkland commented that she knew several other highly-educated men whom one would never guess were anything other than common farmers (103). Although she acknowledged that men out on the frontier might not judge by appearances for reasons other than democratic ideals, for they "…look upon each one newly arrived merely as an additional business automaton—a somebody more with whom to try the race of enter prize, i.e., money making" (109), she emphasized that women looked at newcomers with

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[7] Kirkland described her difficulties arising from inappropriate footwear on another occasion, noting, "…old Broadway habits are *so* hard to forget" (125).

an eye toward hospitality.[8]

Kirkland also evoked humor while criticizing Mrs. Rivers' unmarried older sister, Eloise Fidler, a member of her own class who was overly fastidious and did not take steps to adapt to life in the region after arriving for an extended visit. In this instance, Leverenz's characterization of Kirkland's wit as stemming from imposing "class standards" and evoking "class superiority" does not fit well, since her humor arose in this instance from her criticism of a member of her own class. According to Kirkland, Miss Fidler was far less prepared for life in Michigan than her sister was, and she had difficulty making adjustments to her dress and demeanor to fit in with rural society. Noting her friend's sister's appearance, Kirkland wrote that she appeared close to thirty years old, her neck was "whitey-brown," she was slightly overweight, and she wore a completely impractical silk apron (169). In other words, Miss Fidler was an old maid who did not take adequate care to protect herself from sun exposure, instead dressing more for fashion than function. Kirkland added that Miss Fidler's near-continual use of gloves and elegant footwear singled her out as the subject of much discussion among the women in the Montacute community (174). By providing excerpts of several literary works Eloise admired, and remarking that her tastes were "peculiarly young-lady-like" (173), Kirkland left little doubt in her readers' minds that she found her friend's sister's tastes in literature questionable, at best, and that the woman was silly, at worst (170-3). Her discussion of Eloise's fascination with "Edward Dacre," a clerk at a local merchant's with Eloise's notion of a splendid name (whose actual name was Edkins Daker), certainly made the young women seem like a pretentious fool.

Perhaps Kirkland intended her initial portrayal of Eloise to be ridiculous in order

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[8] Palmer points out the irony of this differentiation Kirkland observed, since she "…criticized the imperialist and capitalist nature of westward expansion even as [she] participated in the process" (43). Furthermore, she notes that frontier hospitality was idealized, for "Scholars who emphasize social conflict as well as consensus have shown that class, ethnic, and sexual friction abounded in real frontier hospitality" (58). Nonetheless, Kirkland included her observations to encourage other upper class women to avoid judging others by appearance alone, were they to relocate to the West.

to make her transformation into a married woman more dramatic. Maybe she felt she could portray Eloise as a comic outsider because, one can suppose, Mrs. Rivers' sister eventually came to laugh about her behavior when she first arrived in the area after she had lived there for a time. Her scorn for Eloise could also have been displaced anger toward Mr. Rivers and his banking scheme. It could very well be, as Nancy Walker conjectures in *The Disobedient Writer*, that "…Kirkland's heaviest sarcasm is directed at Miss Fidler [because of] the extent of the distance she wishes to put in this, her first book, between this image of the woman writer and herself" (104). I would argue, however, that Kirkland was illustrating to members of her target audience how ludicrous they, too, would seem if they rigidly followed the Northeastern standards in the way Miss Fidler did upon relocating to the Great Lakes region. Thus, Kirkland's account became a cautionary tale that compromise was necessary to bring genteel standards to fruition gradually in such a rustic setting.

Similar to Kirkland's commentary about Eloise Fidler and her notions of taste and propriety, she chided other members of the community, including herself and Mrs. Rivers, whose upbringing, education, and notions of proper gentlemanly or gentlewomanly behavior left them ill-prepared for life in Michigan.[9] She noted, "…young ladies who have been at boarding school and learned to paint water melons in water colours and work Rebecca at the well in chenille and gold thread find real thrifty housewifely sewing very slow and hard work to earn even bread and salt by" (153). Counting herself as one of these boarding school alumnae, Kirkland related a humorous incident that occurred when she and Mrs. Rivers attempted to assist the "Titmouses" when the entire family, save one child, fell ill. The two women brought an assortment of foodstuffs to the homestead and offered assistance. Unfortunately, while they were up to the tasks of making bread and tea, they were incapable of milking the family's cow. Kirkland remarked, "How we regretted our defective education, which prevented our rendering so simple yet so necessary a service to the sick poor" (198). Kirkland

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[9] See Kirkland's description of the "B" family. The husband is a gentleman and will not work, despite the hardships his family suffered (129-133).

explained that she and Mrs. Rivers eventually had to prop Mrs. Titmouse up on her milking stool to help the woman to conduct the chore herself, as best she could, despite her illness. Caroline Gerbhard interprets incidents such as this one as an indication that Kirkland "…begins to question, even undermine, [her] class assumptions" and comes to realize that "Forms and manners, especially to do with class, are hopelessly out of place in the American backwoods" (170). This assessment certainly has some merit, though one must acknowledge that in some ways Kirkland deflected the humor in the situation from herself and her friend to the Titmouse family. Her description of the family's simple home and Mrs. Titmouse's talkativeness[10] greatly reduced the poignancy of the family's plight, as did her frequent mention of how concerned Mrs. Titmouse was with troubling, as Kirkland wrote (deliberately using nonstandard spelling an effort to capture the woman's dialect), "sich grand ladies!" (196). Nonetheless, Kirkland's account of how she and Mrs. Rivers came to the aid of the Titmouse family underscored her earlier reflection that life in Michigan necessitated treating everyone well, or risking lack of aid in one's time of need.[11] She demonstrated that the Great Lakes region was no place for "proud distinction" (111). Quoting Nathaniel Parker Willis, Kirkland summed up life on the frontier and its demands upon the individual as a return to freedom and instinct, rather than continually abiding by the precepts of civilization—a "love of unbounded and *unceremonious* liberty" (249, italics in original).

Although Kirkland did not clearly define what type of education would best prepare someone for life in the West, she touched on the subject throughout *A New Home*. Aside for noting that the instruction and schooling she and Mrs. Rivers received poorly prepared them for life in Michigan (198), she discussed the "republican spirit" (308) that prevailed in the region. For example, she identified pride, "the bugaboo of the western country," as well as a spirit of equality, as aspects of the prevailing regional

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[10] Kirkland noted Mrs. Titmouse spoke so much she must "…have paid her devoirs at Castle Blarney" (195).

[11] Specifically, Kirkland remarked, "What can be more absurd than a feeling of proud distinction, where a stray spark of fire, a sudden illness, or a day's contre-temps, may throw you entirely upon the kindness of your humblest neighbor?" (111).

culture that prevented someone from accepting what would be considered charity in the East, instead considering such acts "kind offices" (220, 308). Kirkland further noted that while many men and women were ill-prepared for the challenges of life on the frontier, men seemed to adapt better, whereas many women "have made sacrifices for which they were not at all prepared" (247). Self-sufficiency was essential in Michigan, Kirkland remarked, for "the division of labor is practically unknown" and "…each woman is, at times at least, her own cook, chamber maid and waiter; nurse, seamstress and school-ma'am; not to mention various occasional callings to any one of which she must be able to turn her hand at a moment's notice" (123). She reflected that simplification was also essential, as was the acknowledgement that "warfare" with one's neighbors over what someone from the East might consider to be her unreasonable demands and expectations for access to one's possessions might prove "even more costly than submission" (309). Kirkland might not have provided a specific educational curriculum for genteel women and their daughters planning to move to the West as settlers, but she clearly established that the focus for preparations needed to be on basic skills, rather than refinements, and that a flexible attitude and willingness to overlook class distinctions among neighbors, when needed, would serve any newcomer well.

The prevailing tone in *A New Home* indicates that Kirkland still preferred to hold fast to the ways of life in the East, though she acknowledged any efforts to make changes needed to occur in a gradual manner. Stephanie Palmer contends that Kirkland's writing did not demonstrate much sympathy for her neighbors, instead aligning the writer more closely with her "ideal Eastern readers" than with the residents of Montacute (46). Janet Floyd further comments that the narrative of *A New Home* is "…relatively unconcerned with the participation, much less the incorporation, of the narrator in the community she describes beyond the exigencies of practicality" (133). Given Kirkland's general depiction of her neighbors was somewhat derogatory, the text supports these arguments, for her descriptions of her neighbors who came from different socio-economic backgrounds overwhelmingly served to differentiate her from them while firmly solidifying her own gentility—though she adopted some of the exigencies of the area.

Certainly, she demonstrated that she gained a greater appreciation of the importance of community, such as when entire families fell ill from yellow fever or malaria and were at the mercy of others for assistance. Furthermore, she characterized the Montacute Female Beneficent Society as the den of social ills and the nucleus for a caste system (224). That said, declaring herself "a denizen of the wild wood" and reflecting she was "forever beyond [high society's] pale" (313) did little to mitigate the poor reception of her work by the real life citizens of Pinckney.[12] Of course, Kirkland's target audience members were fellow genteel women back in the Northeast—not her neighbors in Montacute. Even the title she chose for her book, *A New Home, Who'll Follow?* indicates that she envisioned her readers as genteel women back in the Northeast—the women who might follow her to the West as settlers. As Leverenz notes, Kirkland was "…the consummate patrician, moving among artisans and farmers," and her book was "…laced throughout [with] her belief that true ladyhood can thrive on the egalitarian American frontier, if the lady keeps her will and wits about her" (152-4). She wrote *A New Home* not as advice for her present neighbors, but as a practical and social guide for other genteel women who would one day join her in the West.

Eliza Farnham was more overt *Life in Prairie Land* than Kirkland was in *A New Home* in urging other women to follow her from the Northeast to the Great Lakes region. Her comments echoed those of Kirkland that freedom and "the compensating power of the wilderness" could have a tremendous effect on people (249). In contrast to Kirkland, however, Farnham expressed more enthusiasm about the eventual outcome life on the frontier could have on women's education and advancements in the role of women in family and society. For Farnham, the frontier represented certain ideals Americans should strive for, including carving out "civilization" from the wilderness, cultivating the land, reforming society, improving educational opportunities, and enhancing the rights of women. She proclaimed that prairie settlement would reveal how "great, and good, and strong, is man when left to govern himself; free from want, from oppression, from

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[12] Palmer notes that "…the habits, speech, and living conditions of the 'indigenous' people [of Montacute] are the object of amusement, discomfort, or scorn" (101).

ignorance, from fear!" (408). For her, the Great Lakes region was a land filled with considerable opportunity.

Farnham depicted the rural tradition of hospitality in Tazewell County positively, perhaps because her readers expected her to discuss this commonly recurring theme about life on the frontier, but I would argue she also did so as a means of encouraging other women back in the Northeast to follow her in settling the region. For example, in describing the types of people who inhabited the part of Illinois where she lived, she noted that "[t]he hospitality of the people of the west is exhaustless," and "[s]uch as their homes are, the stranger is ever welcome to them, and to what they contain. The single room is as freely shared as if it were twenty, instead of one. The abundant table is never too small for all that are within hearing, when it is laid" (331). Certainly, Farnham encountered exceptions to the prevailing attitude of hospitality, but they were so rare that she made special note of them. For example, while on a journey to visit another part of Illinois, she met a hostess at a stage house who was surprisingly unwelcoming. Engaging her in conversation, Farnham learned that the woman felt imposed upon by visitors and resented her husband for establishing the way station and putting her in a position where she had to deal with travelers routinely.[13] First pointing out that the woman had a responsibility to extend hospitality to her visitors since she "lived in such a place that people must stop with [her], or suffer all the inconveniences of traveling through an uninhabited country," Farnham then noted that "[o]ne of the greatest comforts known among civilized people is that of finding a pleasant substitute for your own home, when abroad" (297). She reassured her readers that they could expect to receive hospitality should they follow her to Illinois, in keeping with the societal norms of the region.

While Farnham marveled at the generous, welcoming nature of most of the settlers she encountered on the frontier, she also clearly conveyed to her readers that her personal standards for decorum and cleanliness were exacting, thereby asserting her own gentility and aligning herself with her target audience members. It was not that she was

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[13] Farnham's experience reinforces Palmer's comments on the realities of frontier hospitality differing from that of the myth (58).

unwilling to make concessions, for she readily conceded that social conventions were more rigorously enforced in larger frontier towns, such as Alton, Illinois (372-374), and the greater the distance one traveled into the prairie, the less formal and reserved society became.[14] She also indicated that she was willing to make allowances for settlers' lack of education. That said, she conveyed that she had her limits, for she could not forgive poor housekeeping or neglected personal hygiene. In this respect, she clearly maintained certain standards that she had in New York as a member of the upper-middle class,[15] and her writing demonstrated that she was engaged in something similar to the "civil subjectivity," or viewing the West with the eyes of an Easterner, that Merish identified in Kirkland's writing.[16] By writing about her continued observance of exacting standards of cleanliness, Farnham's account undoubtedly resonated with women like her back in the Northeast. She indicated it was possible to maintain certain standards, even on the frontier.

By contrasting the home where her sister Mary lived and its inhabitants with those of her sister's neighbors, who were originally from Kentucky, Farnham showed her

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[14] Even in towns, Farnham noted that people often failed to observe standards for common decency and social decorum. Upon stopping at a "very filthy house" (301), she described how she asked the landlord for use of a private room to freshen up after many hours on the dusty roads, and he showed her to a room he had already let out, assuring her that the occupant would not return until evening. As soon as she barricaded the door and began to bathe, the occupant returned and demanded admittance. Farnham refused and insisted she would not vacate until she had finished. She later discovered the room's occupant was "a well-dressed, gentlemanly-looking person" with "a wide crape band on his hat!" (304). Given the man's appearance and attire, she inferred that he should have known how to behave, but he abandoned good graces out on the frontier.

[15] Susan Imbarrato's *Traveling Women* focuses on 18th Century women's travel writing, but her observations about the way "some travelers aggressively imposed their own standards and sense of social order" still pertain here, in Farnham's descriptions of her sister's next-door neighbors' home. Imbarrato notes that "this reaction reveals anxiety about relocation and the prospect of adapting" and that female travelers often "demonstrate their desire to re-create and reinforce familiar, genteel society" (90).

[16] Brigitte Georgi-Findley remarks that "Farnham's observations of Illinois settlers and western nature are interlinked with the narrator's self-representation as a cultured participant-observer" (38).

readers the types of extremes they might encounter in Illinois. She could not find fault with the cleanliness of Mary's attire, and her first impressions of the landscaping surrounding the dwelling where her sister, brother-in-law, and nephew lived were mostly positive. She later described her first tea with them in delighted terms, praising how "…the shining plates were laid upon the snowy cloth; a reflector filled with tender biscuits glittered on the hearth; [and] the tea-kettle bubbled into the fire" (58). Perhaps she was simply being kind or overly idealistic in her enthusiastic depiction of her sister's home; however, she did not fail to mention that her sister remarked upon her tanned appearance, expressing concern that Farnham appeared to have abandoned wearing her gloves and veil during her journey to Illinois (54-5). Her account of this conversation with her sister demonstrated that Mary enforced standards of gentility. Therefore, it is more likely that Farnham accurately depicted her sister's success in maintaining exacting standards of cleanliness in her household, despite residing near the prairies of Illinois, far from the Northeast.

In contrast, Farnham certainly did not restrain herself when discussing her first impressions of her sister's next-door neighbors' home and family. In this respect, she conveyed to her readers the shock she experienced when she encountered people who made no effort to maintain their home in a clean, orderly fashion. She painted a vivid picture with words of the exterior of their house, noting it was "one of the meanest description of cabins" with broken windows, a fetid pigsty out front, and children living in squalor playing in the dirt, attired in rags, all around it (64). Conjecturing that poverty might be a plausible excuse for the "degraded condition" of the family, her ire increased when she discovered that the father was highly respected and of adequate means. Ultimately, Farnham determined that the reason for this family's deficiencies was the "incapacity of the mistress of this family to appreciate a better condition, or help to create one" (65-6). She further noted that nearly every other time she encountered a family living in such terrible conditions, the woman was to blame. Women played an important role on the frontier, in Farnham's view, of maintaining or improving families' socio-economic status. Her description of this family's poor living conditions demonstrated to

her readers that life on the prairie was not perfect. Genteel women could expect to encounter different types of neighbors. Some would be like her sister, Mary. Others would be like the family from Kentucky. By implication, however, she indicated that overall conditions would continue to improve, should more genteel women come West.

Farnham experienced dismay when she discovered her sister's next door neighbors lived in squalor. Unfortunately, all too soon, she faced the prospect of living in similar conditions, herself. She explained that after they were married, she and her husband encountered difficulties when they tried to find a temporary place to live while awaiting construction of their own home. Noting that this situation was not unusual in rural Illinois, she conveyed that others might encounter similar challenges procuring suitable lodging, should they choose to settle in the West. While the Farnhams' experience was something of an ordeal, she also demonstrated that it was not necessary to abandon all of one's standards. Discussing the availability of short-term housing, she noted, "Suitableness was a consideration quite out of the question, for be it known to the fastidious that seeking board in the west is very different from the same thing in New York. Here [Illinois] the host is favored, there the guest" (115). After several days of inquiries, word of a Quaker family with available lodging heightened Farnham's expectations, based on her experiences when she stayed with Friends back in the East. She noted, "My imagination immediately conjured up the most delightful pictures of order and neatness" (116.). Her husband had visited the home before agreeing to lodge there and was pleased with what he had observed. Unfortunately, as Farnham explained, what they as a newlywed couple encountered upon arriving to move in was a dwelling replete with filth and disorder.[17]

The shock that Farnham experienced upon discovering the squalor in which this family lived was profound. Beginning with a charming description of the home's exterior, a scene in keeping with "our claims to gentility" (115), she contrasted what laid

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[17] Farnham later learned that the reason her husband encountered a far cleaner home was a coincidence. He happened to visit the family right after the landlady conducted her fortnightly mopping of the floor (136).

without and within for her readers. Rather than rising to greet them, the landlord remained tipped back in a chair wearing nothing but a pair of trousers and a shirt—an extreme state of undress, for the era. Given that Farnham's husband previously met the man, Farnham's audience members could assume that he, too, presented a far better appearance on that occasion. Her first impression of her landlord's wife was far worse. She described a woman of "slatternly" appearance making bread on a sooty table. Her clothing in obvious disarray—evidently from recently breastfeeding her youngest child—the woman openly resumed nursing in front of the Farnhams (116). Noting the family's next oldest children, two girls, were begrimed, she encouraged the reader to envision "...then, the dirty house, the dirtier man, the dirtiest woman, and the most dirtiest children, for nothing but a double superlative will convey any idea of their condition, and the writer [Farnham] sitting in the midst clad all in white of the most unsullied purity" (119).[18] Farnham, in her clean, white attire, effectively served as a foil to the filthy conditions of the cabin and its occupants.[19]

As trying as this ordeal undoubtedly was for Farnham, it served as her introduction to the rural conditions and primitive culture that even the most genteel individual might encounter in the Great Lakes region of the era. As Susan Imbarrato notes, "…the public house hastened, if not initiated, the socialization process whereby the eastern traveler was introduced to the frontier" (65). Deciding she had little choice but to remain in these lodgings, Farnham explained that she resolved she would make the most of them, noting, "I should have a little place of my own somewhere that could not be proof against hot water and soap and there I could sit alone and enjoy its neatness" (121). Although she opted to stay with the Quaker family, Farnham clearly differentiated herself from them by her attire and her comportment, thereby highlighting her own genteel,

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[18] James Hurt makes an interesting argument in *Writing Illinois* that Farnham was not just concerned with housekeeping: *fear* was a core motivation for her (32).

[19] Floyd states in *Writing the Pioneer Woman* that Farnham's emphasis on the filthiness of the family's cabin and food preparation area, in particular, "signif[ies] an unbridgeable gap between middle-class female boarder and farming family to justify a separation between them" (103).

socially superior status. While she admitted she would rather not have stayed with the family, she explained that she knew she had no better option, so she chose to remain.[20] Relieved she would be dining with the couple's oldest daughter, a young married woman of tidy appearance who apologized for the unkempt appearance of the cabin where she and her husband were staying, Farnham demonstrated her flexibility and positive attitude when she improved upon her situation by thoroughly cleaning her allotted space, erecting sheets and quilts hung from ropes as privacy screens around her bed, and scrubbing until cuts riddled her fingers and blisters cover her hands (127). She also acknowledged that she encountered resistance to her enforcement of standards of order and cleanliness. When her landlord's wife dismissively observed the results of these efforts and indicated with "coolness" that she preferred a larger space, Farnham expressed to her readers that the woman's opinion did not matter, for her hostess was an ignorant fool. She later dismissed the landlord for his "barbarian prejudice" when he told her husband that Farnham should bathe outside at the communal washing station, for the "…outdoors is good enough for anybody" (130). Refusing to obey unreservedly, Farnham wrote that she continued to bathe indoors, but she made a show of "sham washing" outside her cabin with her wash basin on the sill.

Perhaps Farnham put on such a display of apparent compliance because she feared that not acquiescing to her landlord's demands would lead to numerous other confrontations. She apparently wanted as little to do with her hosts as possible. As she noted, the Quaker family might have had "…the name of an illustrious preacher of the sect to which he claimed alliance and had originated in the same neighborhood; but the branch of the family to which he belonged had left Long Island many years before for 'Virginny;'[21] and as their fortunes declined had gone farther west, till he now occupied

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[20] Stephanie Palmer speculates while Farnham wanted to establish a clear class distinction between herself and her Illinois neighbors, perhaps she had "a more secret desire to belong as [equal] rather than class [superior]" (42). In the case of the Quaker family, this was certainly not the case.

[21] It is possible that Farnham also had a bias toward individuals from the south, in general. See her remarks about people from Kentucky on pages 159 and 179 of *Life in*

the outpost in Illinois" (131-2). She showed that these Quakers from the South were not at all the same type of Quakers she knew back home and that she had no desire to change her ways to match theirs. In this respect, as she adhered to standards for ladylike behavior through "will and wits" and refused to abide completely by her landlord's rules regarding where she was permitted to bathe, Leverenz's assessment of Kirkland appears to pertain to Farnham, as well. Certainly, her Quaker hosts would probably have attributed Farnham's behavior to "pride," rather than "social superiority" (Leverenz 151-2), but Farnham demonstrated it was possible to improve one's lodgings in even the most primitive conditions in the West and that one need not trouble oneself with offending others when it came to exercising sound housekeeping practices.

Like Kirkland, Farnham expressed pleasure when she met individuals who were well-educated and possessed proper bearing and manners (243). In contrast, she did not write about any new friendships in great detail, nor did she criticize any friends or relatives of friends by name. She did, however, single out those upper-class women whom she encountered in her travels throughout Illinois who were particularly unprepared for life on the frontier. For example, on one occasion when she stayed overnight in a hotel, she had the opportunity to observe a group of "highly dressed" (350) men and women as they frittered the evening away playing backgammon and cards while discussing the latest fashionable trends. Farnham wrote that another woman arrived in the parlor shortly after one of the group began complaining that she could not bring her piano with her when her family moved to the frontier, and she related her brief conversation with the newcomer[22] about "the country, the character of its inhabitants, and the effect which life in it was calculated to exert upon different classes of persons" (353). She indicated that the other woman shared her opinion that the education upper-class

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Prairie Land. Apparently, she viewed people from Kentucky as awkward and unsophisticated, as members of the lowest socio-economic class, or both.

[22] Given the conversation Farnham had with the newcomer, it is not unreasonable to surmise no such woman existed. Farnham might have inserted the newcomer into this part of her narrative as a fictional element to justify elaborating her views on acceptable education of women on the frontier.

women received in the eastern United States poorly prepared them for life on the prairie, but she was less optimistic than Farnham was about the possibility true reform of women's education would occur "as more rational views of the duties and obligations of woman get abroad" (354). According to Farnham, the two women agreed, however, that these particular upper-class women longed for the luxuries, fashions, and refinement, ignorant "of nature filled to overflowing with whatever is best calculated to stimulate intellect [and] strengthen the nobler feelings" (355). In other words, since they were incapable of benefitting from all the possibilities life in Illinois offered them, they were not the type of women who should have moved to Illinois from the Northeast.

Farnham apparently viewed the West as an eventual leveler of society extremes—with her preference being an alignment toward middle-class norms. In this respect, the assessments Leverenz makes about Kirkland's status as the "consummate patrician" (152) who clings to "true ladyhood" (154) do not transpose very well to Farnham. For example, in contrast to the way Kirkland described Eloise Fidler, Farnham did not evoke wit or humor when she described the elegant individuals from the East whom she assessed as unable to adapt to life on the frontier. These individuals would certainly qualify as "patrician," but Farnham seemed less amused by their behavior than angered. Also, aside for her exacting standards for order and cleanliness, Farnham seemed disinclined to enforce the more stringent forms of the strictest types of "ladylike" behavior on the frontier. Certainly, her comments about the Quaker family from "Virginny" (132) indicate she was possibly biased against people from the South; moreover, she often portrayed herself as socially superior to the people she met in Illinois. Overall, however, Farnham was unabashedly enthusiastic about life in Illinois and its potential for positive change on people. Declaring that she had "loved the West" (iii), she commented that life in the Illinois wilderness had "purifying, ennobling, and elevating" (iv) influences on settlers. She saw the West as a land of possibilities, much like Margaret Fuller did in *Summer on the Lakes, in 1843*.

As a traveler rather than a settler, Fuller's experience of the Great Lakes region was somewhat cursory. She was also far more circumspect in what details she shared

with her readers. In contrast to Kirkland and Farnham, who varied in the amounts of detail they provided about neighbors but included information about their traveling companions and families, she opted not to provide specific details about the friends she traveled with and visited during her journey, reflecting that

> The narrative might have been made much more interesting, as life was at the time by many piquant anecdotes and tales drawn from private life. But here courtesy restrains the pen, for I know those who received the stranger with such frank kindness would feel ill requited by its becoming the means of fixing many spy-glasses, even though the scrutiny might be one of admiring interest, upon their private homes. (67)

Summer on the Lakes, therefore, included even fewer details, not only because Fuller's visit to the Upper Midwest was of far shorter duration than Kirkland's or Farnham's, but also because of a conscious decision on her part not to provide this type of information.[23] Rather than "exploiting" her "patrician" status, Fuller took pains to conceal her connections. Nonetheless, Fuller's assessments of some of the people she met clearly distinguished herself from them. Moreover, her writing did, occasionally, show evidence of what Merish terms "civil subjectivity" (96), thereby aligning her with genteel women back in the Northeast, her target audience members.

While Fuller visited areas that were popular with tourists, as well as places that were then on the western boundaries of settled parts of Illinois, she tried to avoid use of conventional "picturesque" descriptions and to come up with new ways to convey what she experienced. Often in her writings, however, she contrasted the places she visited and the people she met with New England and New Englanders, the unfamiliar with the familiar. Because she was traveling from one place to another throughout the Great Lakes region over the course of one summer, her interactions with or observations of

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[23] Before publishing *Summer on the Lakes*, Fuller conducted additional research on the people, places and things she encountered during her travels. She also read Kirkland's *A New Home, Who'll Follow?*

various people were usually transitory, like snapshots in time.[24] Given the limitations she self-imposed on her observations, what details she did choose to include were, possibly, of greater significance. Early in her journey, for example, she saw a man taking in the splendor of Niagara Falls. She noted that "He walked close up to the fall, and, after looking at it a moment, with an air as if thinking how he could best appropriate it to his own use, he spat into it" (6). Considering what this action might signify, she commented that she hoped instances of "utility" like this one would not "be seen on the historic page to be truly the age or truly the America," and she conjectured that "A little leaven is leavening the whole mass for other bread." Rather than finding the humor in the situation, as Kirkland might, in order to distinguish the man and his behavior as socially inferior, Fuller pondered the possible larger significance of his action. This metaphor for the effects that "common man" could have on greater society reoccurs elsewhere in her work and acts as a warning sign that gentility was necessary on the frontier.

Like Kirkland and Farnham, Fuller either expressed shock or pleasure about the living conditions of the people whom she met when she described visits she made to the homesteads of various settlers in Illinois and Wisconsin. Her repeated use of the word "slovenly" in describing the "typical" settler is reminiscent of Kirkland's and Farnham's descriptions of the settlers' cabins they encountered and underscored the era's class distinctions. Again, Fuller's discussion of instances when she met individuals who were uncouth or who lived filthy conditions provided a realistic overview of what it was like to travel in the region while also serving to differentiate her from these types of people.[25] In

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[24] As William Stowe notes in "Conventions and Voices in Margaret Fuller's Travel Writing," "Fuller uses the conventions of the travel book to speak with a number of voices…. She does not reduce all these elements to a single, consistent narrative, but she does put them together and give her reader the opportunity to hear them talk to each other" (256).

[25] While judging people based on their housekeeping standards might seem superficial, it was not unusual in this era. As Richard Bushman contends in "American High-Style and Vernacular Cultures," "outward signs of gentility" could function as "assurance of common assumptions and predictable behavior, of a commitment to reason, tolerance, and respect" (359).

turn, her praise aligned her with genteel women back in the Northeast. Arriving in Geneva, Illinois, she noted that the town "reminds me of a New England village, as indeed there, and in the neighborhood, are many New Englanders of an excellent stamp, generous, intelligent, discreet, and seeking to win from life its true values." She added, however, "Such are much wanted, and seem like points of light among the swarms of settlers, whose aims are sordid, whose habits thoughtless and slovenly" (36-7).[26] From this description, it was clear what type of settler Fuller preferred among "the variety in the population" (39). She conveyed that she held aspects of New England society in higher esteem than those of frontier society, a stance that might align with the "civil subjectivity" described by Merish concerning *A New Home, Who'll Follow?* Later in her travels, however, Fuller was dismayed to make the acquaintance of "a family quite above the common," whose barefooted patriarch, ashamed yet proud, "told us a story of a man, one of the richest men, he said, in one of the eastern cities, who went barefoot from choice" (Ibid.). Fuller seemed embarrassed by the man's prideful efforts to justify his unusual, shoeless appearance.[27] Given his family was "quite above the common," she apparently felt he should have made an effort to receive them while appropriately dressed. Perhaps Fuller saw the man's behavior as an indicator of the negative effect life on the frontier could have upon someone from the New England social elite—a warning for future genteel settlers not to abandon standards for proper behavior and attire.

Fuller conveyed to her readers that the West was a land of potential, but much depended on the types of individuals who settled there. Traveling further up the Rock River, she compared typical settlers to marauding Visigoths, dwelling in cabins "which showed plainly that they had no thought beyond satisfying the grossest materials wants" (46). She expressed fear that "their mode of cultivation will, in the course of twenty,

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[26] A subtle indication that the Great Lakes region would greatly benefit from the influence of genteel women, were more of them to undertake the challenge of moving to the West as settlers.

[27] This incident is a reversal of what Leverenz identifies in Kirkland's *A New Home, Who'll Follow?* Fuller saw the man as proud, whereas he attempted to classify his behavior as eccentric, at worst, or socially superior, at best.

perhaps ten, years, obliterate the natural expression of the country" and that "'independent' settlers' careless cheer / Made us indeed feel we were 'strangers' here" (47-8). Similar to her concerns about the man at Niagara Falls, who, according to Fuller, approached the natural wonder "with an air as if thinking how he could best appropriate it to his own use" (6), she evidently worried that certain types of settlers would destroy the best features of the West without immediate intervention from genteel society. Apparently, she was similar to Farnham in that she envisioned the ideal settler as someone who adopted a balance between adapting to life on the frontier and abiding by middle class norms for behavior, attire, and housekeeping. In this respect, Fuller's views do not align fully with Leverenz's connection between "patrician" background and using one's "will and wits" (154) to hold fast to ladylike behavior. Like Farnham, she had clear standards, but Fuller conveyed that she saw the West as a place where all people, including women, could contribute more fully to greater society. She summed up this view by noting, "There are no banks of established respectability in which to bury the talent there [in the West]; no napkin of precedent in which to wrap it" (167).

Fuller explained to her readers that she envisioned a new type of American inhabiting the frontier, free of false pride, educated yet skilled in practical matters, and capable of maintaining healthy living conditions. For example, while she praised those frontier towns that were developed enough to remind her of New England and those "New Englanders of an excellent stamp, generous, intelligent, discreet, and seeking to win from life its true values" (37), she did not necessarily hold all aspects of New England life and culture in high esteem. Early in her journey, she commented about the people on her steamboat who were relocating from the northeastern United States to the West, she assumed, primarily in pursuit of material gain. Noting that "The people on the boat were almost all New Englanders, seeking their fortunes," Fuller expressed concern that "They had brought with them their habits of calculation, their cautious manners, their love of polemics." She worried that "It was to them a prospect, not of the unfolding nobler energies, but of more ease, and larger accumulation" (18).

Fuller, apparently, did not want the West to become like what she identified as the

worst aspects of New England, nor did she want it to degrade to the "slovenly" state found among the lowest common denominator of settlers. Stephen Adams speculates that Fuller sought an "…ideal union of heaven and earth, man and nature" (Adams 258) in the West. This assertion has merit, for it seems that Fuller saw great potential for westward expansion's impact on the country, yet she feared it might not result in an enduring improvement to national culture or values. She noted, "…there is nothing real in the freedom of thought at the West, it is from the position of men's lives, not the state of their minds. So soon as they have time, unless they grow better meanwhile, they will cavil and criticize, and judge other men by their own standard" (18-9). This assessment aligns more closely with Farnham's views on education and the possibilities of the West than Kirkland's. Fuller and Farnham were both, certainly, more willing to criticize aspects of Eastern United States culture that were ill-suited for life on the frontier, not so much to demonstrate their social superiority, but in order to advocate genuine change. This type of change, by implication, was the sort that progressive, genteel women from the Northeast could play a role in effecting.

Like Farnham, Fuller praised the frontier, commenting on its "untouched loveliness" (59). To her, a "charming whole" was attainable in the West with "so little care" (46). She saw life in the West as full of opportunities, such as the ample amount of land available for settlement largely eliminating the need for children to relocate away from their parents' homesteads and the possibility that "with a very little money, a ducal estate may be purchased, and by a very little more, and moderate labor, a family be maintained upon it with raiment food and shelter" (59). She was impressed by "the boundless hospitality of the heart which if it has no Aladdin's lamp to create a palace for the guest does him still higher service by the freedom of its bounty up to the very last drop of its powers" (114). Noting a tendency among the elite in the West to attempt to adhere "to European standards" (62), Fuller discussed the type of schools that might be most appropriate for frontier life, stating, "I earnestly hope that, ere long, the existence of good schools near themselves [upper class individuals in the West], planned by persons of sufficient thought to meet the wants of the place and time, instead of copying New

York or Boston, will correct this mania" (63). She identified the need for a type of educational curriculum tailored to the West, effectively giving her readers fair warning that the ways of the East were not necessarily entirely suited for the Great Lakes region.

Describing the frontier as having "spontaneous, instinctive life, so healthy and so near the ground" (125), Fuller conveyed her optimism to her readers. Although Nicole Tonkovich comments that Fuller's views on the ideal Western Woman were visionary (92), she adds that she "…takes up multiple and sometimes-contradictory positions, celebrating the West as a site of energetic and democratic expansion even as she condemns its cultural mediocrity, agitating for the betterment of the condition of western women even as she seeks to subsume them under the control of New England ideals of education" (Tonkovich 96). Given Fuller's comments on certain negatives aspects of New England culture, this assessment seems overly harsh. For example, Fuller specifically appeared to seek middle ground when defining what might be the most appropriate education for women in the Upper Midwest. Similarly to Kirkland and Farnham, she noted that the type of education women received in the East did not prepare them for aspects of life on the frontier. She further noted that exceptions were rare: For instance, the women she met who were convent-educated and fluent in French, yet who were also able to kill rattlesnakes and to manage well in the milk barn (38). Fuller also expressed concern of the general "…unfitness of the women for their new lot" (61). As for her ideal woman of the West, Fuller wrote, "An elegance she would diffuse around her, if her mind were opened to appreciate elegance; it might be of a kind new, original, enchanting, as different from that of the city belle as that of the prairie torch flower from the shopworn article that touches the cheek of that lady within her bonnet" (63). William Stowe's assessment that "Fuller's travel writing …express[es] a subtle, complicated understanding of politics and culture, and of the American's—and especially the American woman's—relation to them" (151-2) is a more balanced critique of the seeming disparity in her views on class, culture, and education.

Fuller's positive experiences during her travels in Illinois and Wisconsin centered on people who exemplified her ideal. She noted, after a visit to a community made up of

people from the East Coast and from Europe, "[a] pleasant society is formed of the families who live along the banks of this stream [the Rock River] upon farms. They are from various parts of the world, and have much to communicate to one another. Many have cultivated minds and refined manners, all a varied experience, while they have in common the interests of a new country and a new life" (60). She observed firsthand how the frontier encouraged a sense of community one might not find in New England, where many families who had been established for generations might not be as welcoming of newcomers—particularly foreigners. Making an assessment of the ability of the settlers to establish "civilization" in the Rock River Valley, Fuller referred back to her earlier comments about types of people serving as "leaven" for greater society, musing, "[i]f the next generation be well prepared for their work, ambitious of good and skilful to achieve it, the children of the present settlers may be leaven enough for the mass constantly increasing by emigration" (105). She saw that the potential for improvement of society existed in the West, and she conveyed to her target audience, fellow genteel women, that they could make a considerable, positive difference for the greater good, were they to settle in the Great Lakes region.

Of the four authors discussed in this project, Eliza Steele most clearly aligned with the social elite. Rather than being overt in expressing "patrician" views, as one might expect, Steele was rather circumspect. While she provided more specific information than Fuller did about the people she and her husband stayed with during their travels, the particulars were still minimal. Certainly, her inclusion of details about individuals was far rarer than Kirkland's and Farnham's.[28] It is, therefore, possible that those instances when she did comment about people, their socio-economic status, or what region of the country they came from could have more significance. Perhaps because Steele was a member of the social elite, herself, she did not specifically comment about

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[28] Steele more frequently included excerpts from guidebooks, particulars about the various churches she, her husband, and the other members of her traveling party visited, or specifics about her efforts to disseminate religious books and tracts. She was also, evidently, quite interested in geology, for she often provided detailed commentary on noteworthy geological formations and strata.

any of the women she personally encountered who might have had educations that were too refined for the Upper Midwest or who might have maintained standards for attire and comportment more suited for life back East.[29] Although one can assume her intended audience was her peers, Steele "shapes sympathetic identification" (Merish 96) somewhat infrequently.

Steele conveyed that she had a precise idea in mind when she called someone a lady or a gentleman. While visiting towns with many impressive features, she assumed residents were "wealthy, refined, and well-educated" (37). While visiting in Buffalo, she stayed at the finest establishment, the American Hotel, "of course," where "In fact every thing is good and neat" (67). In farm country, she remarked that dwellings of "superior style…denote…wealth and prosperity" (232). Hers was a world where "…letters [of introduction] procured for us much kind attention," and when a friend called, she and her husband found "a fanciful yacht await[ing] us, and a pleasant party of ladies and gentlemen" (71). These distinctions provided indicators to Steele's readers that she was an elite member of the upper class and that her friends were of similar social standing. She fits Leverenz's description of Kirkland, using her "will and wits" to maintain her status as a gentlewoman throughout most of her journey.

Which people Steele chose to highlight or generalize provided insight into her world view. Relatively early in their journey, she visited friends, the commanding officer at Fort Mackinac and his family,[30] on the fourth of July. Describing the fort as "…presenting at a distance the appearance of a long white line of buildings inserted, into the top of the island high above the town," Steele commented on "…the beauty and the grandeur of the scene" (107-8). Since she and her husband had to return to their steamboat to continue their journey, they could not join in the Independence Day festivities, though they did briefly meet the "ladies and gentlemen" (109). The

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[29] Describing the variety of peoples on the streets of Buffalo, Steele did mention "…the dainty lady traveller with her foreign abiga[i]l, and fantastically dressed children" (71).
[30] Perhaps they had once been assigned to Fort Hamilton, in Brooklyn, and knew the Steeles from there.

commander specifically introduced Steele to a woman Steele identified as "Mrs. S_____t" who, one can conjecture, was none other than Mrs. Schoolcraft.[31] Of note, Steele only described the quarters of the commanding officer and his subordinate officers, homes distinguished by the lovely views from their balconies. As for common soldiers, she either omitted their presence, entirely, or she described them from afar.[32] For example, she later referred to a group of enlisted men at Fort Gratiot as a "line of blue coats…going through their morning drill" (98). Whereas she identified officers as gentlemen, to her, soldiers were anonymous and interchangeable.[33] It does not appear, however, that Steele was attempting to advance her social status with such descriptions. They were merely there for one to observe and to draw one's own conclusions. Perhaps she did not exert as much effort to align herself with her target audience, genteel women in the Northeast, for she assumed they already knew of her social standing. Moreover, the advice she gave for other genteel women who might choose to travel to the Great Lakes region was more specifically focused on ways they could assist with the work of Christian missionaries.

Steele's target audience was a more particular type of genteel woman back East—supporters of missionary efforts. Since her spiritual life was very important to her, and presumably, her intended readers, it is not surprising that she frequently described the churches she visited at various locations along her journey and remarked upon the successful efforts of congregations, or, conversely, the challenges they faced, in conducting evangelization efforts, such as the distribution of tracts. She also summarized the religious lectures she attended and mentioned locations where she left printed

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[31] Steele mentioned Mr. Schoolcraft and identified him as "Indian Agent" on the previous page. Her description of Mrs. Schoolcraft, who was half Native American, fit her well.

[32] Granted, it is probable that Steele had no opportunity to interact with the soldiers. Other than, perhaps, the commanding officer's personal aide, enlisted personnel probably followed orders to keep far away from Steele, a gentlewoman.

[33] Noting that "A few canons looked fiercely out at us" (98), or "they were firing their mid-day salute in honor of the day" (108), Steele gave artillery pieces more notice than the soldiers firing them.

materials (128). In these specific instances, Steele touched on the living and working conditions of poor laborers, albeit in the context of evangelization. After attending a talk given by "Mr. Stillwell," a member of the American Bethel Union in Buffalo, she summarized his key points by commenting that the sailors and canal workers of Buffalo were "the lowest and most worthless class of men" (68). She further noted that upon "mixing with the lower population of Buffalo, and other towns on their route, they exert… a baneful influence" (Ibid.) According to Steele, Stilwell indicated that the most successful minister of the American Bethel Union was formerly a canal boy, who, having once been one of the workers, was best able to relate to them. She did not appear optimistic the sailors and canal workers were the best target audience for the Bethel Union's efforts. For example, when reporting Stillwell's estimation that the success rate for conversions is 150 of 25,000 men, or six tenths of a percent, Steele stated that this is "enough to cheer on the pious missionary" (69), but it must have been apparent to her readers that there was a very slim chance any of these individuals would undergo a conversion and make better lives for themselves.[34]

Compared to Kirkland, Farnham, and Fuller, Steele had very little on-shore interaction with members of the middle class during her travels. Admittedly, she was often in the position of observer rather than participant as she watched[35] the shoreline as her steamboat paddled along. She did, however, periodically comment on the appearance of various log cabins she could see from her vessel when its crew stopped to take on wood.[36] Based on her frequent mention of various hotels, she mostly stayed in fine

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[34] Steele also speculated that the ministry might be more successful if Sunday were no longer a working day for the lower class—a virtually unattainable goal, for the era. Her assessment might simply be an indication of naiveté, but it is possible that she envisioned comprehensive labor reforms.

[35] Susan Roberson noted in *Antebellum American Women Writers and the Road* that, in travel writing, "…we find women appropriating a traditionally male-defined activity—gazing—for their own purposes" (136).

[36] At the mouth of the Wabash River, she observed when the steward "procured…a supply of fresh milk which we saw a young country lass draw from their cow she had just driven home" (219) and she later spied then-presidential candidate Harrison's cabin. She

lodgings when not traveling the waterways, such as the aforementioned American Hotel in Buffalo. On occasions where hotels were unavailable but friends lived nearby, Steele stayed with them. For instance, in Alton, Illinois, she visited friends who lived in "a large picturesque house in the cottage style" (177). To Steele's credit, when she met Benjamin Godfrey, the founder of the Monticello Female Seminary[37] in Alton, she not only toured the school but also praised its efforts to overcome what she said that Godfrey termed "the imperfect education of the young women who settle here" (Ibid.) by providing a balanced education for women that included not only "the course of scientific study usual in seminaries" but also instruction in music, religion and "various *household duties*"[38] (178, italics per original). Overall, Steele usually provided only cursory comments about the average people she observed in passing, such as when she described the streets of Buffalo as "…a constant stream of travelers and immigrants" (71), giving a brief, picturesque overview of the many types of individuals she saw there. Her land-based interactions with "average" people were so rare, Steele seemed eager to see as much as she could, even if that meant eventually overstepping societal norms for privacy and decorum.[39] She seemed eager to make the most of whatever limited opportunities she had to meet settlers, as she also did whenever she encountered American Indians.

Steele's first extensive opportunity to observe life on the frontier up close occurred when she and her husband traveled from Chicago to Peru, Illinois by stage. En route, her first experience at a post house was fairly innocuous. She had breakfast at "a rude log cabin" (127) after traveling a day and a night by stage across the prairie.

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described it as "a neat country dwelling" (237), adding the caveat, perhaps in case her impressions were later disproved, that she saw it in poor lighting from a distance.

[37] This seminary was the same type of institution Fuller hoped for in *Summer on the Lakes*.

[38] While Steele listed the last item of the curriculum in italics, she evidently overcame her initial shock that preparing "'wives of the west'" (179) would include instruction in housework.

[39] By the time Steele was on the steamboat *Monsoon*, she decided to step inside an Indiana farm family's home, uninvited and unannounced (233).

Although she was pleased to see a selection of books inside the cabin,[40] Steele jested that "The mistress and her daughter were very busy scaring up our breakfast, of which, I should think the chickens were the most scared" (128). In this instance, the humor in Steele's account did not stem from what Leverenz terms "the rigorous application of class standards" (151) but in a play on words. In contrast to Kirkland and Farnham, in this instance Steele made no mention of the cabin's level of cleanliness, though she did describe the novel solution the post house's mistress had for roasting and grinding coffee beans. While everyone else drank the coffee "contentedly" (Ibid.), Steele wrote that she did so only because she was thirsty, and she noted that her husband opted to drink milk, instead.[41] Given how far she had traveled by stage, she undoubtedly needed liquid, but she observed good manners by declining the coffee not based on its method of preparation but on her supposed lack of thirst. Apparently, the state of affairs deteriorated at the next post house, outside Joliet, where Steele praised the food but expressed dismay when the landlord and his men came in from the fields, still in shirtsleeves, to join the party at table. Although Steele noted that "one does not dress for dinner on the prairies" and that "While travelling in unsettled countries one must leave one's niceties at home" (133), she was shocked by this behavior.

While Steele was not nearly as specific about her experiences at these two post houses compared to similar accounts in Farnham's *Life in Prairie Land*,[42] the details she

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[40] Although Steele phrased her advice in terms of what she would bring with her would she return to the region, she offered advice for other religious genteel women when we remarked that she wished she had more than "a few tracts" to leave with this family. She wrote, "When I travel again in such lonely parts, I will endeavor to find a corner in my trunks for a few good books to leave among this reading people" (127-8).

[41] Steele has an interesting conversation with the host's son about his horse, a wild looking creature the boy claimed chases wolves and killed them by striking with its hooves.

[42] According to Palmer, Farnham emphasized filthy conditions when she encountered them in order to distinguish herself from members of lower socio-economic classes. Perhaps Steele did not mention squalor as often not only because her journey to the frontier was shorter than Farnham's and she rarely stayed or dined in primitive lodgings, but also because she was a member of the socio-economic elite. Her religious views might also have influenced her to choose to limit her descriptions.

provided about the way stops and her reactions to their inhabitants not only conveyed the rustic conditions and primitive culture of the region but also subtly highlighted that her background and comportment were superior to those of the locals—a rare, overt emphasis of her gentility. This distinction again resonates with Imbarrato's assertion in *Travelling Women* that female travelers often "demonstrate their desire to re-create and reinforce familiar, genteel society" and their judgmental pronouncements often "revea[l] anxiety about relocation and the prospect of adapting" (215-6). In these instances, Steele also used the technique Merish identified in Kirkland's writing by "…locating herself within a community of 'civilized' readers by shaping sympathetic identification…and disavowing an identification with 'uncivilized' frontier inhabitants" (96). Including these details might have served a particular purpose. As Roberson notes, when women travel writers include such particulars, they show that "…they are used to comforts and they are privy to a certain amount of class and gender privilege" (*Antebellum* 142). Despite her acknowledgement of different standards for polite behavior on the frontier, Steele indicated that it took some time to "shut our eyes against soiled table covers, iron knives and forks, etc." (133). She might have intended to indicate that one must make concessions while travelling, but if she really wanted to overlook such faults in housekeeping, she need not have mentioned the filth and disarray.

Steele also provided detailed information about her experiences on the steamboats *Home* and *Monsoon*, which she traveled on from Peoria to Alton, Illinois and from St. Louis, Missouri to Cincinnati, Ohio respectively. Not only might the information she provided have proved useful to future genteel travelers, but it also served as indications that she endeavored to maintain what Leverenz terms "true ladyhood" (154) despite being on the frontier. Whereas she described the *Constellation*, which she took across the Great Lakes, as "a very fine one though not of the first class" (77), her impressions of the *Home* and the *Monsoon* were less flattering. She wrote that she was amused by a framed piece of pink satin prominently displayed with rules for comportment, as well as by some of the settlers she encountered while underway. From a family who wanted her to feel the "*ague cake"* (enlarged spleen) in their son's side to the young woman who asked if she

purchased her brooch from a peddler (155-7), Steele apparently found some of the passengers on the steamboats uncouth, at best.[43]

By giving details of what she found palatable on the steamboats, Steele offered advice for future women of her class who decided to make the circuit of the Great Lakes. She also commented on the drinking water and cooking of the western regions, contrasting her refined tastes with the questionable preferences of the settlers she encountered onboard. Whereas she hesitated to drink a glass of water that, when poured into a tumbler and given time to settle, had "half an inch" of sediment in it," she noted that another female passenger on her steamboat declared such water was "insipid" and said that she preferred "the sweet clayey taste" (211). Steele was shocked when this passenger called for "some water fresh out of the river, with the true Mississippi relish" (Ibid.). She was less critical[44] of the food served onboard the steamboats, noting, "finer beef, fish, bread, etc. cannot be found anywhere" (254). What she objected to was their manner of preparation, for "every dish of animal food is swim[m]ing in a greasy liquor" (Ibid.). Evoking humor, Steele declared she would "Doubtless…be used to it in time and like it as well as our young southern friend who used to expiate upon the delights of hominy and 'possum fat.'" That said, she also indicated she was well aware that she had to adapt to what was served to her as a traveler, noting that she "ma[d]e a point of taking things as quietly as if I had ordered everything" (255). As Imbarrato noted, when female travelers make "keen assessments," they assert "their own authority" and a woman who writes about such details makes the "assumption that her opinion as a genteel woman matter[s]" (90-1).

For all of her direct and subtle indicators of her elite status, on one particular

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[43] The young woman who asked Steele about her brooch had a bonnet that Steele observed was made from "pasteboard covered with pink glazed gingham" (157). Steele later mentioned that the only time she or her peers would wear such a hat was "to run into the garden, or to a neighbor in the county" (165). Steele earlier described a man who asked to see her books and declared he could not read them (they were in French) as a "simple hearted son of the forest" (116).

[44] Steele could, possibly, have been sarcastic, here, but it is unlikely, given her willingness to criticize the food at the post houses.

occasion during *A Summer Journey in the West*, Steele engaged in behavior that was socially unacceptable, even on the frontier. Specifically, she trespassed into a family's home to satisfy her curiosity. While traveling back to Cincinnati on the Ohio River, Steele and her husband disembarked on the Indiana side of the river when their steamboat put in for engine repairs to take a walk and "to say we had been in Indiana." She differentiated herself from the other passengers who also disembarked, many of whom were picking green apples from the trees and feeding them to a farmer's hogs for amusement, noting that she and her husband "were very much provoked" by such behavior (232). It could be that she contrasted her ethics, noting she would "as soon have stolen the farmer's pigs as his apples," in order to once more separate herself from the average persons who were also traveling by steamboat (233). Regardless, when she entered a farming family's home, uninvited and unescorted, and not in a situation where she had to seek shelter or risk injury or death, she clearly transgressed her era's boundaries for polite behavior. Moreover, her fellow travelers followed her example, also trespassing inside the homestead after she and her husband, elites, did so.

Although Steele attempted to excuse her intrusion as the result of an impulse of "Yankee curiosity to see the inside of an Indiana cottage" (233), this incident did not exemplify an effort to maintain her status as a gentlewoman in spite of the challenges she faced on the frontier (Leverenz 154). She seemed aware of her inconsistent behavior, for she attempted to convey that the cottage she visited might belong to members of her own class. She described the home in idyllic terms, noting the "small court-yard adorned with flowers" and her first impression of "a neat apartment with comfortable carpet, chairs, etc." According to her description, the home was spacious and pristine, boasting "a long piazza at the side of the house, ornamented with a row of clean bright churns and milk pans" (233). One is left to wonder if the details she provided were accurate, in this instance, or an effort to make the settlers appear social equals. According to her account of the incident, when the family arrived, the farmer and his wife were followed by a "troop of children bearing pails loaded with foaming rich milk," and they were neither alarmed nor angered by the group's trespassing. Instead, they cordially invited everyone

to be seated and offered them a choice of "new milk or hard cider." By mentioning that the husband and wife were from New York State and moved to Indiana shortly after their marriage, Steele provided another link to herself, since she was also from New York. Despite all of her efforts to show affinity with the farm family and to attempt to justify her actions, she imposed upon the family and abused her status as a member of the social elite. She might have been a woman of elite background, but her admission to her readers that she committed a flagrant violation of accepted norms for behavior (entering a stranger's home, uninvited) reads almost like a confession to her target audience, fellow genteel Christian women, of a transgression she committed during her summer's journey.

Kirkland, Farnham, Fuller, and Steele each evoked standards of gentility in order to align themselves with the members of their target audience, genteel women back in the Northeast. As Bushman reflects, "outward signs of gentility" could function as "assurance of common assumptions and predictable behavior, of a commitment to reason, tolerance, and respect" ("America" 359). Certainly, life on the frontier had the potential to "offend certain women" by "creating a frightening eclipse of 'genteel' behavior, a deterioration of morals, and a loss of control over a generation of daughters" (Burbick 73). That said, none of these authors seemed frightened by the people they encountered; rather, each conveyed to her readers that she was either appalled or amused by strange behavior that she encountered, but she was able to persevere. Kirkland and Farnham demonstrated that a positive attitude and flexible approach helped them to adapt to the rustic conditions and primitive culture of the rural communities where they lived. In turn, Fuller and Steele indicated traveling to the Great Lakes region presented certain challenges, but making allowances did not mean abandoning all standards. Each author demonstrated that genteel women from the Northeast could adapt to life in the West and thrive; moreover, through their influence, they could eventually help to improve the region's culture.

Chapter Three: Marriage, Family, and Death on the Frontier

Caroline Kirkland, Eliza Farnham, Margaret Fuller, and Eliza Steele wrote about marriage and the family, as well as illness and death, in their discussions of their years as settlers or weeks as travelers in the Great Lakes region. Such topics clearly fell within the domestic sphere, and the four authors sometimes used the conventions of sentimental fiction[1] and conveyed their notions of the masculine ideal. The way each writer made use of traditionally feminine subject matters, however, reflected her larger interests. Kirkland, Farnham, and Fuller used their discussions to make comments about matters pertaining to the public sphere, such as possible changes to the institution of marriage and the permeability of social boundaries of the West. Specifically, they advanced feminist views and, in some cases, novel egalitarian social ideals when considering marriage in the context of the frontier. In contrast, Steele apparently endorsed the Cult of Domesticity, or True Womanhood,[2] and her comments about marriage and the family served to reinforce conventional ideals of behavior. Regardless of their individual stances, the authors' remarks served as indications of their greater concerns about the role of women, as well as their anxieties about the possible negative impact westward expansion could have on the country if the region continued to develop without sufficient numbers of courageous, capable refined women to exert appropriate, much-needed influence.[3]

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[1] Jane Tompkins notes in *Sensational Designs* that sentimental novels resonated with prevailing "…attitudes toward the family and toward social institutions; a definition of power and its relation to individual human feeling; notions of political and social equality; and above all, a set of religious beliefs that organizes and sustains the rest" (126).

[2] Defined by Barbara Welter in her classic essay, "The Cult of True Womanhood: 1820-1860" (1966) as "four cardinal virtues—piety, purity, submissiveness and domesticity" (152).

[3] Cathryn Halverson notes in *Playing House in the American West* that many female authors "render the home as a platform for female autonomy, resistance, and imagination rather than sacrifice and obligation," adding that "By playing with domestic and textual conventions, they reconfigure their western settings…[as] liberating and challenging terrains where in which new versions of female individuality and subjectivity can be crafted" (4).

Since *A New Home, Who'll Follow?* contained an account of Kirkland's years in Michigan as a settler, one might expect most of her discussion of marriage and family to center around hers, but this is not the case. Leverenz addresses Kirkland's depiction of her own marriage[4] in *A New Home*. He argues in *Manhood and the American Renaissance* that she neglected to cover her personal experiences with motherhood and child rearing in favor of focusing on frontier social dynamics. This characterization raises some valid points, but it is somewhat misleading. For example, Leverenz indicates Kirkland did not mention that she had children until chapter ten of *A New Home*, and he says that she provided the name of her dog "long before" the names of her offspring (156). What he does not acknowledge is the point when Kirkland started her narrative: she began her work by describing a "scouting" trip she and her husband made from Detroit into frontier Michigan. During this, their first visit to the region, the Kirklands traveled without their children in order to purchase land, to arrange for non-temporary lodging for their family, and to contract construction of a cabin. The decision to leave their children behind in Detroit during this reconnaissance was reasonable, given the rugged conditions in the area. As soon as the Kirklands accomplished these essential tasks, the couple rejoined their children, and once their shipment of household goods arrived from the city, the entire family traveled together to their new home. Furthermore, the "long" time Leverenz says that it took Kirkland to introduce her children after mentioning her dog is, in fact, only ten pages later in her book. Also, if Kirkland truly were "the quintessential lady, [who] only tolerated her children" (Leverenz 156), it is unclear why she chose to mention the special measures she and her husband took to ensure their children's safety when they arrived at their place of lodging. Kirkland, who wrote that "the night air pouring in at the aperture seemed to me likely to bring death on its dewy wings," secured the open, unpaned window with a quilt and blocked the stairs

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[4] Given the focus of Leverenz's book, not surprisingly, he mostly addresses Kirkland's depictions of masculinity.

with the top of trunk (65), in order to prevent accidental falls.[5] She might not have devoted pages at a time to discussions of her children, but she did offer practical advice to other women who might relocate to Michigan with their young sons and daughters.

As for Kirkland's personal relationship with her husband, Leverenz argues that she portrayed him as "bossy, thoughtful, preoccupied and sometimes helpless," and that "she appreciates him primarily, it seems, because of his deviance from the reigning game of manhood" (15-8). He is critical of how Kirkland characterized her spouse and what she apparently valued in her own marriage, but he does not fully consider the Kirklands' personal history. For example, Leverenz notes that "Kirkland…sharply distinguishes her husband from the 'men of substance' who ambitiously pursue the hunt for money" (158), but he does not acknowledge that William Kirkland was an academic who lacked any rural development experience.[6] Also, when he remarks that Kirkland "doesn't bother to warn [her husband] against the folly" of possible further land speculation, instead reminding him to take care of his eye glasses and to stay out of the bog water, he does not consider the humor in Kirkland's added comment, "he was never very ambitious, and already owned Montacute" (45), nor the many problems William Kirkland had coping with his extremely poor eyesight.[7] Kirkland's husband might not have exemplified rugged masculinity, but it did not, apparently, bother her. In contrast to Leverenz, Halverson characterizes the Kirkland's relationship as a "remarkable portrait of companionable marriage" (24). Kirkland certainly included many examples in *A New Home* of the care and concern she and her husband demonstrated for each other.[8]

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[5] Caroline Gebhard provides some insight into Kirkland's caution and why "she never directly alludes to her personal griefs" in her essay "Comic Displacement." Shortly before the Kirklands moved from Detroit, their three-year-old daughter, Sarah, fell to her death from the third floor of the school where they taught (161-2).

[6] The Kirklands taught in New York and later in Detroit before moving to Montacute.

[7] Tragically, William Kirkland drowned in 1848 after losing his eye glasses and falling into the Hudson River after misjudging the location of the ramp while attempting to board a ferry.

[8] See pages 41, 125, 194, and 253 for examples of positive instances in the Kirklands' marriage that Leverenz does not discuss in his work.

Perhaps, as Halverson notes, "family members serve Kirkland as a vehicle not for sentiment but wit" (24) in *A New Home*. Kirkland might also simply have decided to focus her work less on herself and more on the community where she lived. Dawn Keetley notes in "Unsettling the Frontier: Gender and Racial Identity in Caroline Kirkland's *A New Home, Who'll Follow?* and *Forest Life*" that Kirkland, "By marginalizing her own roles as wife and mother, …effectively resists being wholly defined as them; at the same time, as a wife and mother she infuses those categories with the mobility of an individualism deemed 'masculine'" (24). This is an interesting analysis of Kirkland's self-depiction. She was certainly genteel, but she was also well educated and continued to teach even after she was married, so she did not restrict herself, personally, to the domestic sphere. It could be that she minimized her discussions of herself precisely for this reason. She instead wrote about women in her community her readers would not consider unusually progressive, using her discussions about them to touch on larger societal concerns. Regardless of her reasons and motives, while Kirkland might not have been very specific about details of her own family, she certainly provided ample details about the married couples she met in Montacute. Her descriptions of the various husbands and wives she encountered on the frontier in *A New Home, Who'll Follow?* conveyed her ideals for marriage and family life.

Kirkland was, admittedly, primarily advocating temperance[9] when she wrote about the drunken married men she encountered and the negative impact their abuse of alcohol had on their wives and children, but her discussion also illuminated her views on the responsibilities of husbands for their families and how life on the frontier magnified their importance.[10] Early in her work, she described the considerable hardship that a wife and her children suffered because of the drunkenness of the family's patriarch. As she

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[9] In addition to the example that follows, see pages 58, 64, 71, and 77 for Kirkland's further remarks about the negative effects of whiskey production and consumption on the frontier.

[10] Although Kirkland did not specifically depict any inebriated women in *A New Home,* she conveyed what she identified as the responsibilities of wives and mothers elsewhere in her work.

related, en route from Detroit into "'the timbered land,'" the Kirklands stayed at a "wretched inn" owned by an alcoholic whose recurring "horrible drunkenness" and "insane fury" (13) instilled mortal fear in his family members. So terrible was the situation, Kirkland explained that the inn keeper's wife broke with popular conventions of social decorum and reserve, for "she [could] not forebear telling…her story." The woman confided to Kirkland, a stranger,[11] that she had experienced a reversal of fortune, departing "a well-stored and comfortable home in Connecticut" for a "wretched den in the wilderness." Kirkland noted that within a year of her encounter with this family, she learned that the woman's husband was incarcerated after knifing someone during an alcohol-fueled fight. He later "died of delirium tremens, leaving his family destitute" (14). While very few families suffered such extreme privations when a husband and father drank to excess, Kirkland's condemnation of the man for his abusive, alcohol-fueled demeanor underscored what she deemed the core responsibilities of a husband, namely, to provide for his family while ensuring the safety and welfare of his wife and children.[12] Her account of how this family departed a secure existence in the Northeast and lost everything in Michigan when its patriarch could not adapt to life in the West also served as a possible warning for others who might be considering moving to the Great Lakes region to become settlers, yet who were not suited for the endeavor.

While it was important, in Kirkland's view, for a husband to meet the basic needs

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[11] Perhaps the reason the woman transgressed social boundaries by confiding in Kirkland was in an effort to obtain assistance for her plight. Kirkland later wrote about other instances when people died in the area, indicating that the community rallied around surviving family members in their time of need, but also conceding that there were limitations to this support resulting from social scorn, much the same as back in the Northeast. For example, Kirkland noted that the Newland family was angered and embarrassed by the death of one of their daughters. Only later, through what she could glean from gossips, did Kirkland learn that the daughter died from a botched abortion. She noted, "this was but one fatal instance out of the many cases [italics in original text], wherein life was perilled in the desperate effort to elude 'the slow unmoving finger' of public scorn" (186).

[12] Kirkland specifically condemned the increasingly popular practice of producing liquor in Michigan, assessing that this abuse of "fields of golden grain" (14) had a far-reaching, negative impact on residents of region.

of his family while maintaining equanimity, she also advocated in *A New Home* for both husbands and wives to preserve harmony in their households and to avoid acting in an excessively domineering manner. Kirkland provided one such example in Mr. and Mrs. Simeon Jenkins, a case where first impressions were deceiving. When Kirkland first met Mr. Jenkins, brother of Miss Jenkins, the local school teacher, [13] Kirkland found him a boor. When he learned that her husband did not smoke and that she "hoped he never would," he declared that he was "boss" in his house and boasted, "if my old woman was to stick up that fashion, I'd keep the house so blue she couldn't see to snuff the candle." Kirkland assessed that he made this assertion "rather angrily, and with an air of most manful bravery" (96). Apparently, Mr. Jenkins' proclamation was one of bravado, however, for Kirkland learned more about him after she had resided in Montacute for a time. She eventually became close friends with Simeon Jenkins's wife, whom she described as "…one of the nicest women in the world" (289). Praising the way Mrs. Jenkins exerted influence over her husband, Kirkland noted that she "*manages* [italics mine] him admirably," for he "has long since left off gambling, drinking, and all the other vices of that class, except smoking" (289). Although she noted that Mrs. Jenkins "pretends to like the smell of tobacco, and takes care never to look at him when he disfigures her well-scoured floor," Kirkland believed her friend was "not without hopes of his [Mr. Jenkins'] thorough reformation" (289). The Jenkins' relationship was one of compromise; husband and wife each had made concessions to maintain harmony in their home,[14] a considerable contrast to the owner of the "wretched inn." In this respect, Kirkland apparently advocated for families to maintain middle class, urban values even after relocating to "the outskirts of civilization" (8) in the Great Lakes region.

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[13] This was the same woman discussed in Chapter One of this work who smoked during a visit to Kirkland (*A New Home*, 96).

[14] Although Mrs. Jenkins possibly had ultimate authority. Kirkland's characterization of Mr. Jenkins was comical, overall. Perhaps the unstated implication regarding the family who lost everything was that the wife and children might not have suffered such a fate if the woman had been better able to "manage" her husband by exerting influence over him in the domestic sphere.

Kirkland evidently viewed marriage as a partnership, and she considered the best marriages the ones between persons who complemented one another. In *A New* Home, Philo and Polly Doubleday were such a couple. When Kirkland first met the newlyweds, she remarked that they balanced each other as partners in marriage "as vinegar-bottle to oil-cruet" (117), though Mrs. Doubleday had a tendency to scold her husband with "bottled vengeance" (118). In contrast to the drunken inn keeper Kirkland earlier met, however, she was not as condemnatory of Mrs. Doubleday.[15] While she did characterize her as overly fastidious and a chronic complainer, she also noted that she had many redeeming qualities. According to Kirkland, Mrs. Doubleday maintained a clean, orderly household, took care of her husband, rendered aid to neighbors in need, and never resorted to gossip. In turn, Mr. Doubleday, a patient man with a strong sense of humor, was resilient and found humor in the triggers of his wife's outbursts. When she became particularly agitated, he wrote couplets of verse he called "poetical justice" (117) that quickly diffused his wife's anger. Kirkland assessed that they were a well-matched pair. She wrote, "Mr. Doubleday…is certainly the only man in the wide world who could possibly have lived with her; and he makes her a most excellent husband" (117). As for Mrs. Doubleday, Kirkland commented that she possessed "excellent qualities as a wife, a friend, and a neighbour" (120) and added that she underwent a considerable, positive character change when she bore her first child. Kirkland reflected, "I never saw a being so completely transformed" (121), noting that the couple's marriage became even more harmonious when the pair adapted admirably to this change in their family composition. After having a baby, Mrs. Doubleday ceased domineering and scolding her husband and only became angry in defense of her offspring's welfare. With this change in temperament, Mrs. Doubleday came close to attaining Kirkland's behavioral ideal as a wife and a mother.

In many respects, Kirkland's account of the Doubledays could have taken place

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[15] Certainly, Mrs. Doubleday was not an alcoholic. A possible reason for Kirkland's different attitude toward her could be that the Doubledays, like the Jenkins, balanced each other well in their roles as husband and wife.

back in the Northeast. She added certain details, however, to her story to convey some of the challenges of life in rural Michigan and to demonstrate the necessity for all members of the community to support one another. For instance, shortly after their child was born, the daughter of their neighbor Mrs. Howard came by to tell Mrs. Doubleday "that her mother 'wanted Mrs. Doubleday to let her have her baby for a little while'" (121). Evidently, Mrs. Howard's son Benny had a sore mouth and was not nursing sufficiently. Kirkland explained, "I pass for an oracle of paps and possets" (121), noting that she came to the rescue by lending a breast pipe to Mrs. Howard, presumably so she could extract more of her milk to relieve her symptoms of breast engorgement. Back in the Northeast, women could probably purchase breast pipes (also known as sucking glasses) fairly easily, but in her part of rural Michigan, Kirkland was, evidently, the only woman in possession of one. As such, she remarked that it "threaded the country for miles in all directions" (122). Her example showed that social boundaries were far more permeable in the Great Lakes region.

Kirkland acknowledged that young, newly-married couples who had grown up in rural settings were best suited for the challenges of establishing a farm in the region, for they had both the attitude and the aptitude needed to sustain themselves and, eventually, their children. These husbands and wives, she noted, were "simple in their habits, moderate in their aspirations, and hoarding a little of old fashioned romance unconsciously enough in the secret nooks of their rustic hearts," and they were often most successful in establishing their own farms and families. "They have youth, and health, and love and hope, occupation and amusement," Kirkland reflected, "and when you have added 'meat, clothes, and fire,' what more has England's fair young queen?" (245). Of course, Queen Victoria might not have thrived in Michigan, and Kirkland took pains to indicate that newlyweds who relocated from cities to the frontier could find themselves having difficulties adapting to rural living. She underscored this point by telling the story of Cora Hastings, a former student of hers, and Cora's husband, Everard. Kirkland related that the Hastings had eloped from New York City and settled for a time in southwest New York State in an effort "to carve…out for themselves a home in the

wilderness" (265). Although they were entirely ill-prepared for rural living,[16] sufficient funds, kindly strangers, and loving parents saw them through their ordeal.[17] The couple eventually settled in Michigan, living in comparative luxury on a farm "managed by a practical farmer and his family" (284). Theirs was a story like a fairy tale, complete with a happy ending.[18] Throughout *A New Home*, however, Kirkland cautioned that reality differed from childhood stories.[19] The key to success for a young couple wishing to establish a farm on the frontier, Kirkland asserted, was being amply prepared for making "a home on the outskirts of civilization," where they must contend with "primitive" (8) conditions and the inherit challenges of life in the West. She showed that farming was hard work, and for upper class families, husbands with the education and skills to work in professional fields faced better prospects in the Upper Midwest. In turn, their wives needed to be ready to face the initial challenges living in rural locations presented.

Frankly addressing the strains relocating to the frontier could place on families, Kirkland noted that couples who had been married for several or more years who moved to the Great Lakes region often had challenges adapting, for "it kills old vines to tear them from their clinging-places" (246). In this respect, while she encouraged other genteel women to follow her to Michigan, she did not hesitate to provide specifics about

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[16] According to Kirkland, the Hastings, espousing a Romantic philosophy, sought to live a pastoral idyll in "a spot, so wild and mountainous woody, as to be considered entirely impracticable any common sense settler; so that it seemed just very place for a forest-home for a pair who had set to live on other people's thoughts" (270).

[17] Shortly after the birth of the Hastings' first child, the baby and her father contracted small pox. Father and child recovered from the disease, but the experience changed Mrs. Hastings. Kirkland wrote that she emerged from this traumatic experience "…a new creature, a rational being, a mother, a matron, full of sorrow for the past and of sage plans for the future" (283).

[18] Kirkland's account of the Hastings reads more like fiction than non-fiction. She evoked elements of the sentimental novel in her narration of the challenges the young couple faced.

[19] Noreen Lape argues in "The Frontier Origins of North American Realism" that "through the 'romance' of Cora and Everard Hastings, [Kirkland] deconstructs the conventions of popular romance and the excesses of sentimentalism to reveal the traps and illusions embodied in these genres that, at best, mislead the emigrant and, at worst, cause 'incidental harm.'" (377).

the difficulties they must be prepared to encounter. She purported that married women who were accustomed to the material comforts of life in the East suffered the most because of "the wearing sense of minor deprivations" (246), as well as their newfound isolation, far from family, friends, and familiar social circles. Since they were essentially restricted to their homes, they especially missed the various household items they abandoned before heading west, such as certain articles of furniture. Their challenge, Kirkland reflected, was that they stopped viewing these things as luxuries but as "necessary to daily comfort." and their "little world is overclouded for lack of the old familiar means and appliances" (246). In contrast, she observed that many husbands were oblivious to their wives' struggles to adapt to their changes in circumstances.[20] Perhaps some reasons that men might not have missed creature comforts, according to Kirkland, were that they were too excited by the prospects of the frontier or too exhausted from farming from sunrise to sunset to remark upon their absence (246). Life in rural Michigan certainly afforded men many opportunities to exercise independence.

Despite the challenges life in rural Michigan presented, it was the efforts of women, Kirkland argued, that ultimately transformed their families' cabins into homes. She deemed wives as responsible for creating a sense of home, wherever their husbands chose to live.[21] She reflected, "I have never yet happened to see it otherwise where these improvements have been made at all," for it is the wife who has "the moving spirit" in a harmonious marriage (248). Leverenz characterizes Kirkland's assessment as the "generalized resentment" of "a discontented wife and mother…struggling to articulate

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[20] Kirkland did not address the fact that men might miss people or other aspects of life back East, though they were more socialized to be more stoic and less likely to speak about such concerns. For many of the men, the transition to a rural environment and establishment of farms was unfamiliar and difficult work. Likewise, she did not acknowledge women might benefit from involvement in more than household responsibilities. Given her own background as a teacher, it is somewhat surprising she did not consider the possibility that women settlers might be unhappy because of the lack of intellectual opportunities that rural Michigan offered.

[21] Kelli Larson notes in "Kirkland's Myth of the American Eve" that "Kirkland establishes that…the practical comfort provided by the female hand, whether it be preparing tea or a bath, …makes living in the wilderness bearable" (12).

herself in terms of gender rather than class" (161), but he does not consider another possibility. As Laura Smith notes in "Reconfiguring Frontier Architecture in Caroline Kirkland's Western Sketches," "Kirkland [is], perhaps[,] drawing on sentiments of 'Republican Motherhood' from the previous generation, [and] sees [a wife's] ability properly to manage domestic space as crucial to the development of the nation, particularly in frontier areas of Michigan" (186). In turn, genteel women who were prepared, along with their husbands, for the challenges of life in rural Michigan had an opportunity to exert considerable, positive influence over the newly-established communities. For women whose husbands were able to continue to work as professionals in the Great Lakes region, rather than farmers, Kirkland personally demonstrated that they would have the ability to influence society in these rural areas by establishing support networks,[22] thereby helping young couples to succeed.

Whereas Kirkland's readers had to deduce her matrimonial ideals from the various discussions of married couples that appeared throughout her book, Eliza Farnham was quite forthright in stating her views in *Life in Prairie Land*. Rather than starting her book with a description of herself or her family, Farnham saved these details for later in her work. Instead, early in her account of her experiences as a settler, she not only touched upon her accommodations on the steamboat and some of the humorous incidents[23] she experienced during her journey, but she also provided a detailed overview of an encounter she had with a newlywed couple from Indiana whose marriage struck her as horrific in its inequities.[24] According to Farnham, she met the bride and groom while

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[22] For example, Kirkland described her involvement with Montacute's Female Beneficent Society.

[23] Farnham's description of her steamboat captain, "…a soft-voiced, red-haired gentleman, in white silk hose, and French pumps, umbrageous ruffles, and a light satin cravat" (15) is so vivid, it reads like an excerpt from local color literature.

[24] Similar to the way Farnham's chance meeting with a woman at a hotel who shared remarkably similar views about women's education could be a fictionalized account, designed as a way to expound upon her views, Farnham's encounter with the newlyweds on her steamboat could be semi-fictional or entirely fictional. Farnham's exchange with the "Hooshier" is so lengthy and detailed, it is possible she exaggerated its scope in her book in order to expound upon her views.

en route to Illinois. The husband was a young man who treated his wife in a manner so "authoritative" (18) that Farnham and her fellow passengers were uncertain, at first, about their relationship. She quickly determined that he was worthy of contempt, however, for he showed no consideration for his traveling companion (19), and he was an angry, unkempt man who privileged brute force over reason (27-9). After she learned that he decided to marry not for companionship but because he was in need of "a good, stout woman" who "can pay her own way, and do a handsome thing besides, helpin' [him] on the farm" (36), Farnham explained that she took him to task for his attitude. As a genteel woman, she showed her readers she was in a position to attempt to exert influence over the behavior of the uncouth inhabitants of the region—something they, too, could expect to have the opportunity to do.

When Farnham described her conversation with the man, she disclosed her own ideals about marriage. She clearly disapproved of marriages that lacked a foundation of mutual esteem and respect between husband and wife. Perhaps Farnham did not believe romantic love was essential for marriage, but she advocated that spouses have friendship and consideration for one another. She delineated some of the contributions she believed that wives should make in a marriage while reiterating the importance of an emotional connection between spouses when she asked the man, "Do you care nothing about a pleasant face to meet you when you go home from the field, or a soft voice to speak kind words when you are sick, or a gentle friend to converse with you in your leisure hours?" (38). Farnham then attempted to persuade him to display more consideration for his wife. In so doing, she identified some of what she saw as a husband's responsibilities to his marriage partner. For instance, she asked the man if he did anything to prepare for his wife's arrival at her new home, such as completing any improvements to the homestead. She also inquired if he would "take [his wife] on some pleasant ride or walk," or "speak very kindly to her, [or] endeavor to make your new home and company agreeable to her" (38-9), should his wife become homesick. In Farnham's view these were basic actions appropriate for any groom, even one who might consider marriage as only a business arrangement. To her dismay, it was apparent the man did not court his wife or seek to

marry her because of their compatibility; rather, he simply sought a strong, hardy woman capable of contributing to his farm and, one can assume, of bearing strong sons (38-40). Following this exchange, Farnham's language in describing the relationship between this man and his wife increasingly included animal terminology and imagery, thereby emphasizing his baser nature.

When Farnham had the opportunity to observe directly the man's interactions with his wife, and later to speak with her, she concluded their marriage was one in which the wife was doomed to a life of misery. She was shocked to see the groom's philosophy that a wife should be strong and able to perform physically taxing labor put into practice when he refused to assist his wife in removing the many items stacked on top of her trunk on the steamer's deck, instead telling her, "Wall, you ain't a baby, I reckon, that you can't tote it somewhar else" (40). In an effort to intercede on behalf of the bride, whom Farnham called "his victim," she admonished him "that it was not customary to treat females so in *our country* [italics mine]; that a man would be pronounced a brute who would refuse to render or procure assistance for a woman under like circumstances, even if she were his servant, and such conduct was still more abhorrent toward a wife" (40-1). The man responded that such might be the case for women from New England, but not for women from Indiana.[25] Farnham's quote of his assertion that he believed that his wife "will think pretty much as I do, or not at all!" (41) summed up his views. As for his wife, after speaking with her, Farnham learned the woman expected she would have a difficult period of adjustment to married life, "till," as the woman said, "I get broke in" (43), but in time she anticipated becoming accustomed to her lot. The phrase "broke in" again struck Farnham as more appropriate when referring to a head of cattle than to one's

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[25] Farnham's exchange also underscored the regional bias one might encounter in the Upper Midwest. She was critical of the "Hooshier" and others of his ilk from Indiana, and he was dismissive of individuals from New England. She might not have influenced him to change his behavior, but she demonstrated to her target audience that the Great Lakes region offered considerable opportunity for those who chose to relocate there to influence society and eventually bring about positive change. Should enough genteel women object to the poor treatment of farmers' wives, positive changes might occur.

spouse. She was also deeply troubled that this bride faced a hopeless existence, akin to slavery. After assessing that the young woman lacked the character "to redeem herself" (42), she expressed fear that she would, eventually, become like a machine.

During Farnham's account of their conversation, she interjected that he was a "cold-hearted fellow!" and a "selfish brute!" (38), adding that he was a "base-hearted tyrant" (40). The man was a "beast" (41), in her estimation, because he married to gain an unpaid worker in his household, rather than a soul mate. Farnham noted that marriage, apparently, "was a perfectly business matter with him" (38). Although he indicated he would give his wife "enough to eat and wear" (39), he seemed dismissive of the notion she might require anything further. After he rebuffed several attempts that Farnham made to persuade him that he should treat his wife as a person with feelings and become sensitive to the possibility she might miss her friends and family back home in Indiana, she sarcastically told him, "No, sir, I see you possess a very happy insensibility to the woes or happiness of others. Your wife has occasion to congratulate herself on the prospects of life with a person elevated so far above emotions which move the human herd" (40).

Farnham specifically defined the institution of marriage as a social contract where husband and wife "promise to study each other's happiness, and endeavor to promote it" and "not a mere bargain of business" (39). As Lori Merish notes in *Sentimental Materialism*, her lengthy exposition of the moral obligations of the marriage contract…highlighted…a categorical distinction between sentimental property (which should be loved) and instrumental property (which can be used and consumed)" (21). Farnham's reference to "our country" was particularly illuminating of how poorly this Indianan's views on marriage struck her. He might have been an American by citizenship, but in her estimation, his treatment of his wife was akin to a foreigner's. Merish's speculation that "Farnham's anecdote identifies the 'marriage contract' of middle-class marriage…against the degenerate, destructive proprietary practices of savage Westerners" (22) appears valid. Farnham certainly juxtaposed her progressive views as a New Englander with the regressive views of this "Hooshier." Of note,

however, Farnham did not portray all individuals from Indiana as uncouth and domineering. For example, later in her work she praised the marriage of a young newlywed couple she met, and she specifically mentioned that the husband was from Indiana. Hers was not a clear-cut case of regional bias, therefore, so much as derision for those individual settlers in the West who struck her as uncivilized.

After arriving in Tazewell County, Farnham described two married couples, the Andrews and the Esculapiuses,[26] who were in some ways the inverse of the newlyweds she met on the steamboat, for in these two instances, the wives domineered their husbands. Although she condemned the husband from Indiana who browbeat his wife, she was also critical of men who did not take an active role in their marriages, instead opting to let their wives run roughshod over them. Mr. Andrews, for instance, was a man "of ample means for surrounding himself and his family with every comfort" who instead lived in squalor because he and his wife could not agree on necessary improvements for their home. His wife, according to Farnham, had "only the most disgusting indifference to the common comforts of a more civilized condition," and an "aversion to change or action." Mr. Andrews told Farnham he would "prefer a better manner of life" (68), but her impression was that he was unwilling to exert the necessary effort to convince his wife—or simply to take whatever appropriate measures himself to effect positive change. It is clear that Farnham found his reticence unconscionable. Similarly, she expressed dismay that Mr. Esculapius was "less a master in his household than any other man" (157). He was "good-natured," but he was also "timid and retiring," and he submitted to his wife in all things. His wife, according to Farnham, was a vicious gossip who was so domineering that she was the true master of her household, displacing her husband until he was of little or no importance in his family. Farnham remarked that she was "imperative," and someone who "was always foremost in every domestic movement." Mrs. Esculapius' few praiseworthy characteristics, according to Farnham, were often tempered by the calculating way she employed them. She wrote, "…this lady is a pattern

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[26] Farnham explains she chose this pseudonym not to imply Mr. Esculapius was a physician but that his wife was like a snake entwined around a staff, her husband (157-8).

housekeeper, a kind friend to those whom she likes, a sympathetic woman at a sick bed, a hospitable and generous hostess in her own house" (157-9). In other words, Mrs. Esculapius kept up appearances, but her graciousness was limited only to those whom she liked, who were ill, or whom she permitted to visit her in her home.

One of the married couples Farnham met who best lived up to her ideal of marriage as a partnership founded on mutual respect were the newlyweds with whom she dined while staying with the Quaker family. Sidney, the host's daughter from his first marriage, and her husband, a young man from Indiana, impressed Farnham with their devotion to each other. She remarked that "they were really pleasant models of domestic happiness" (133) and then supposed that they were happier than far wealthier people who were out East. Although she stated that the husband was a "Hooshier of the broadest stamp," she wrote that he had many redeeming qualities. Specifically, "his kindness was inexhaustible" and he had complete confidence in his wife, who took "what capacity she had for love and "concentrated [it] on her husband" (133). He was also a hard worker who accomplished a great deal on his farm, yet he was attentive to his wife's needs and spent Sundays in her company, always attending church and then often visiting friends, afterwards. The man seemed to live up to Farnham's notion of the ideal man on the prairie, for based on her description, he was masculine, hardworking, committed to republican values, and self-reliant. Farnham assessed, "They were far happier with these rude enjoyments, than thousands who live in luxury and ride in splendid carriages, with liveried servants" (133). Her account of this young couple served as a reminder to her readers that it was possible to be happier in Illinois than they were in the Northeast.

Farnham had clear ideas about what wives should contribute to their marriages. She believed that women play an important, if unheralded, role in society and that hard work[27] was an essential part of forging strong character. She recalled a conversation she had with her sister in which they discussed a neighbor, Mrs. S., who possessed the ideal qualities of a frontier housewife: she was "kind, just, generous, and hospitable, with clear

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[27] Within norms for women.

perceptions and a ready humor, blended with the best feelings which belong to humanity, yet almost wholly devoid either of the arts of cultivated life, or the prejudices of her class" (111). In addition to these character traits, Farnham believed that a core responsibility for married women was to create a sense of home for their families in even the most primitive conditions. Noting that a woman who had acceptable housekeeping skills should be able to keep any dwelling in a neat and tidy state, even the simplest cabin with a dirt floor (321), she expressed disdain for wives and mothers who did not maintain clean households. She added that nearly every time she encountered a family living in poor conditions, the woman was to blame, either because of the inability "to appreciate a better condition, or help to create one" (66). In her view, wives' failures in this regard undermined the health and welfare of their families.

Farnham was rather circumspect when discussing her own marriage in *Life in Prairie Land*. She traveled to Illinois to join her fiancé, who had relocated to Tazewell County ahead of her to establish his law practice. Similar to Leverenz's somewhat misleading observation that Kirkland did not provide many details of her own marriage in *A New* Home, James Hurt notes in *Writing Illinois* that Farnham's "engagement and her marriage to 'Mr. F—' are passed over in silence" and her husband then "disappears as mysteriously as he appeared and is absent for sixteen months" (27). While Farnham was certainly more informative about the relationship of other married couples than she was about her own marriage, Hurt does not acknowledge that she specifically described the difficulties she and her husband faced first lodging as boarders and later moving into a house of their own. From these humorous anecdotes, it was possible for Farnham's readers to gain an understanding of what traits she most valued in her husband. For example, after she and Thomas Farnham were wed, and she moved from her sister's home to reside with him in the Quaker family's homestead, Farnham wrote that her husband arranged this lodging for them with the Quaker family after their wedding. This was a challenge, given the shortage of housing in the region. He was attuned, however, to Farnham's displeasure with the unclean conditions of the family's cabin, asking her to step outside and querying, "You cannot live even for a few weeks in that place, can you?"

(120). Farnham clearly appreciated his offer to try to find another place for them to live, though she declined, knowing alternatives were all but nonexistent. In order to deflect their landlord's attention from Farnham, her husband also made a show of performing personal hygiene by the well, after their host informed him that she must bathe indoors (130-1). Later in her book, after the Farnhams relocated to the two-room house she described as a "tenement," her husband coordinated for delivery of furniture and a Franklin stove, and the two worked together to perform initial cleaning of the floors. The fact that Farnham's husband participated in making their house a home is indicative that their marriage was more of a partnership than was typical of the era, or at least more so than was typical back in the Northeast.[28] Farnham's last humorous anecdote described her mixed success in preparing a meal when her husband invited business colleagues over for dinner. Admitting that she had an "entire unacquaintance with practical housekeeping" (188), she described how she ruined the meal. According to her account of the incident, however, it was her brother Hal who made negative comments about her efforts. Her husband accepted her for her limitations and was later beside her when they grappled with the deaths of family members.

Similar to *A New Home*, the impact of illness and death upon families was also a topic in *Life in Prairie Land*, but while Kirkland's experience, as detailed in her book, was indirect, Farnham's was both indirect as well as personal.[29] Early in her period of residency in Illinois, Farnham wrote that assisting others when illness struck was essential on the frontier, and she and her sister conducted "visits of mercy…in times of

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[28] As Carl Degler noted in his classic work, *At Odds: Women and the Family in America from the Revolution to the Present*, "One of the hallmarks of the emerging modern family…was the sharply differentiated roles or functions assigned by social custom to wife and husband. Women's activities were increasingly confined to the care of children, the nurturing of husband, and the physical maintenance of the home…. Husbands, on the other hand, the ideology proclaimed, were active outside the home, at their work, in politics, and in the world in general…. This sharp division between the roles of husband and wife, which contemporaries called their different spheres, is what is meant by the doctrine of the two spheres, or separate spheres" (26).

[29] Farnham's sister Mary, and then her own infant son, died during her residence in Tazewell County.

sickness or death" (63). Such aid became a social leveler. Farnham recalled her sister Mary's comments that there was a "claim strangers have to our hospitality," for in times of hardship, a feeling of solidarity binds the members of the community. Disease "breaks down all the barriers of ceremony wherewith we are restrained in more populous regions" and "makes the recollection of the cold and heartless ceremonies of more artificial society sickening" (83). Whether someone took ill from malaria or cholera, or a man was attacked and eaten by wolves (266), life on the frontier had its dangers, as did life in the for her readers in the Northeast.

Farnham demonstrated that the difference was that settlers might be far from the network of extended family they could have relied upon back home. Instead, they had to rely on other members of their communities. To illustrate this point, shortly after she arrived in Illinois, her sister Mary told her about the tragic past of her boarder, a widower. The previous year, heavy rains had inundated the region, and disease followed. The man fell ill, followed by his wife, who was pregnant. The entire community rallied to assist the family in their time of need, but the woman went into premature labor, her child was stillborn, and three days later, she too, passed. According to Farnham's sister, the widower's "grief was appalling. Sickness had blanched his dark face into a ghastly hue, and drawn deep furrows in his cheek, which were immovable as if chiseled in granite" (87). He could no longer bear to live in his house, instead opting to live with his former neighbors. As he struggled to reconcile his grief, he drew upon the Tazewell County community for support, and the community members willingly offered him their aid, even opening their homes to him so he would not have to live alone.

After describing how she helped others in their times of need, Farnham wrote about her experience with great personal tragedy. Following a lengthy decline, Mary died of tuberculosis. Although Farnham wrote, "Much and bitterly did I grieve over the dreadful void left in our circle by her death," the "holy office" (253) of motherhood[30] forbade her to mourn fully the loss of her sister. Farnham's son, who had fallen ill when

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[30] In her characterization of motherhood, Farnham appeared to endorse at least some of the tenets of the Cult of Domesticity or True Womanhood.

her sister was in the last stages of her illness, was now, too, dying. Two weeks after her sister died, he also passed away, and the double blow took a considerable toll on Farnham. She found returning to her home with her husband from the gravesites most challenging, noting, "But the home whence our darling was forever gone! Oh who shall describe its desolation! Who shall ever tell what a mother feels when she returns to her silent house from the new-made grave of her only child?" (255). In instances like these, she grew to appreciate the solace life on the prairie offered. She reflected, when "Living near to nature, artificial distinctions lose much of their force [and] humanity mainly for its intrinsic worth—not for its appurtenances or outward belongings" (iv). She personally witnessed how life without "ceremony" and strict observance of social barriers could help someone during times of hardship and loss, when far away from home and family.

Later in her book, Farnham described two separate instances in which spouses died. Her descriptions of the effects death has on the surviving husband or wife were indicative of her personal grief following the loss of her sister and her son, but they also highlighted once more her ideal notion of spousal devotion. Her first account was a story she heard about a widower whose wife saved her youngest children from a prairie fire, only to give birth to a stillborn baby and then to die from the effects of exposure shortly after her husband and oldest child return from traveling to procure supplies for the winter (268-83). Farnham wrote that the man was so grief stricken that he abandoned his homestead and relocated elsewhere with his children. Her second account was the story of a man who went hunting, never to return. An extensive search proved fruitless, and it was only after the spring thaw that his body was washed into a river and discovered. Farnham described how his widow "passed from the doubts, fears, hopes, and dread of the long search, to the terrible certainty she was widowed!" (391). Her husband had been "the father of her sons, the noble friend and protector of her past life, the tender nurse, and sympathizing friend of her sick years, her reliance when misfortune or sorrow came, her shield, her strong and patient friend in the adverse trials that had transplanted them

from affluence in the east to toil and comparative poverty in the west" (393-4).[31] Farnham did not recover from this loss during the remaining time that she resided in Tazewell County. In each instance, the death of a spouse had a profound effect on the surviving family. Her lengthy meditations on these incidents indicated she became more sympathetic to these losses after her own personal experience with deaths of family members. In this instance, she used her discussion of matters pertaining to the domestic sphere not to advocate for wider change, as she did in her discussion of marriage, but perhaps to express and to process her personal grief.

Although Margaret Fuller differed from Kirkland, Farnham, and Steele because she was unmarried, she still had specific ideas about the roles husbands and wives should play, and she conveyed her views in her work. *Summer on the Lakes* contained periodic commentary on marriage, based on observations the author made during her circuit of the Great Lakes Region, as well as three separate in-depth discussions of women who were in unhappy marriages, Fanny P., Mariana, and the Seeress of Prevorst. In contrast to Kirkland and Farnham, Fuller was less direct, at times, in detailing her views. For example, early in her journey, a fellow passenger, Mrs. L., told her about Captain P., an officer with an excellent reputation and high expectations for advancement who married unwisely. Fuller wrote that the story's "moral beauty touched [her] profoundly" (19), but she said little about the couple's marriage beyond her retelling of Mrs. L's tale. Fanny, the captain's wife, was a rude, vulgar Englishwoman with "low habits of mind" and "exaggerated dress and gesture." "Hard and material" and prone to excessive consumption of alcohol, she made a poor impression on her husband's associates, who "wondered at the chance which had yoked him to such a woman, but yet more at the silent fortitude with which he bore it" (20-1, 25). Mrs. L's father suspected the captain had compromised Fanny and thereby felt compelled to wed her, for he had "the fortitude of…religious submission...enkindled with the enthusiasm of the martyr" (22). Moreover, "he was not one to sin without making a brave atonement, and that it had become a holy

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[31] Farnham's description of the widow's deceased husband appears to be a list of the qualities she viewed as those of the ideal man.

one, was written on that downcast brow" (26). Since Fuller did not make any of her own assessments about the marriage of Captain P. and Fanny, her readers were left to conjecture exactly what she means by the "moral beauty" of their story.[32]

Fuller could have simply approved of Captain P.'s commitment to his spouse and his marriage, however unhappy he might be. Another possibility is that she could have also admired Fanny for her unconventional ways. When she contrasted how easily American Indian women could separate from or divorce their husbands,[33] compared to European-American women (219, 239), she seemed to be advocating for reforms in American society for how readily women may leave their husbands.[34] Cheryl Fish's *Black and White Women's Travel Narratives* has some useful insights on Fuller's depiction of this couple. Fish argues that Fuller approved of Fanny P. According to her, Fanny was a "hybrid foreign wom[a]n," and her behavior "suggested…the failure and potential of America as a site for freedom and a model of racial fusion and gender equality" (100). By addressing Fuller's reaction to Captain P.'s wife in the context not of marriage but of democracy in American society, Fish purports that Fuller included examples of marriage in *Summer on the Lakes* as a way to conjecture about the potential impact of continued westward expansion and waves of European immigrants, the advancements in women's rights, and the intermarriage of European Americans, African Americans, and American Indians (114-118). This is certainly a plausible explanation of the multiple meanings Fuller conveyed when she wrote, "moral beauty," and she did touch on "amalgamation" later in *Summer on the Lakes*, declaring it "…would afford the

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[32] Many scholars conjecture that the story of Captain P. and his wife Fanny and her friend Mariana and her husband Sylvain were not simply diversions, but stories Fuller included (semi-autobiographical, in part) made up to illustrate points on society.

[33] I will discuss Fuller's depictions of American Indians and their marriage practices more fully in Chapter Four.

[34] Captain P. might have been experiencing "martyrdom," trapped in a miserable marriage, but as a man, divorce would be easier for him to obtain. Mrs. L. noted when discussing the officer's marriage with Fuller that her father felt that Captain P. "had resigned himself to despair, and was too delicate to meet the scandal that, with such a resistance as such a woman could offer, must attend a formal separation" (22).

only true and profound means of civilization" for American Indians (195). One must first consider, however, what else Fuller said about marriage in her book.

Fuller specifically addressed the challenges wives face on the frontier at various points throughout *Summer on the Lakes*. For example, she discussed the "unfitness" of many cultivated women from New England for living conditions on the frontier. Here, her assessments were similar to Kirkland's and Farnham's. Fuller wrote that relocating to the West "has generally been the choice of the men, and the women follow, as women will, doing their best for affection's sake, but too often in heart-sickness and weariness" (61). She asserted that husbands usually made the decision to move to the frontier, and their wives complied, albeit unwillingly. In addition to their not believing "that it is best to be here," Fuller noted that for genteel women who relocated to the West with their husbands to establish farms, "their part is the hardest," for "their resources for pleasure are fewer" and "they are least fitted for it." Whereas their husbands were able to "find assistance in field labor, and recreation with the gun and fishing-rod," most of these women were poorly prepared for the rigors and privations of their new lives and did not have access to the leisure pursuits they enjoyed back home (61). Essentially, Fuller was warning her readers that genteel women who might be used to large social circles and many diversions in the Northeast could have difficulty adapting to the West, and their marriages could suffer from this added daily strain.[35] Her comments also reflected her view that men were far more suited to face the rigors of life in the West, perhaps because their preparation for lives in the public sphere armed them with the ability to adapt and persevere more readily.

Even for women used to rugged living, Fuller showed that life on the frontier proved challenging. Later in her book, she met some farming families who had relocated from western New York State. She remarked that in this instance, "both men and women knew how to work. Nevertheless, the women did not like the change, but they were

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[35] Fuller's concerns could also apply to newlywed couples who relocated to the Great Lakes region, for upper class women in the Northeast did not receive education and training to prepare them for life in the West.

willing, 'as it might be best for the young folks'" (125). These women already had considerable experience with the rigors of homestead living, but nevertheless, they did not wish to move from their established families' farms to start anew in the West. Fuller concluded that most men could find contentment wherever they went, for popular culture fostered independence. In contrast, even women accustomed to rural living missed the network of friends and family members they had departed. Most men might not have "had some idea of home beyond a mere shelter, beneath which to eat or sleep," (40), she wrote, but women were not content with mere basics. Observing that some women enhanced their homes when they planted roses or locusts, "their home loves, [to bring] into connection with their new splendors…traces of this tenderness of feeling" (39), Fuller approved when she visited a home where "Within, female taste had veiled every rudeness—availed itself of every sylvan grace" (58). She most likely would have agreed with Kirkland that these were the efforts of wives who made their cabins into homes—and that these were possible strategies other women who came to the West could employ to make their new lives more bearable, if not pleasant. While not getting as specific while discussing the roles of husbands in these brief descriptions, she also acknowledged different gender roles based on physical, intellectual, and emotional capabilities.

Fuller did address an aspect of married life more specifically than Kirkland or Farnham. She believed that parents played an important role in raising their children to become contributing members of society. Early in her journey, she commented on the virtual absence of elders on the frontier. Passing a group of families who were on their way home from church, she remarked, "The parents had with them all their little children; but we saw no old people; that charm was wanting, which exists in such scenes in older settlements, of seeing the silver bent in reverence beside the flaxen head" (51). With the lack of elders in communities, Fuller realized that the efforts of parents became even more important than they were back East. For example, she assessed that a mother played a crucial role in the education of her children on the frontier. Expressing hope, Fuller exclaimed, "Might the western woman take that interest and acquire that light for the education of the children for which she alone has leisure!" Fuller believed that

fathers, too, played an important role in emulating behavior, for "It would be a happiness to aid in this good work, and interweave the white and golden threads into the fate of Illinois." She added that "the next generation [must be] well prepared for their work, ambitious of good and skillful to achieve it" (105). In this respect, Fish's contention seems valid that Fuller considered marriage on the frontier in terms of the greater context of the impact of westward expansion on the country. Husbands and wives in the Great Lakes region had the opportunity to shape the future through the impact they had on their children.

Fuller advocated that parents should foster creativity and individuality in their offspring. While traveling back home, she met "an old man, an Illinois farmer" who impressed her because he went with a dozen young men, including his son, to the shore of Lake Superior. She noted that "He had been the counsellor and playmate, too, of the young ones" and that he was an unusual individual, for he "underst[oo]d and live[d] a new life in that of [his] children instead of wasting time and young happiness in trying to make them conform to an object and standard of [his] own." She was impressed by his willingness to allow "The character and history of each child [to] be a new and poetic experience." In so doing, he "won the sweet from the bitter" (248). Fuller saw great possibilities for America's future in the young people raised on the frontier by parents with such progressive attitudes.[36] Were one to extrapolate Fuller's comments on the father's willingness to live "a new life" with his children and apply them to the nation, perhaps she also saw potential for the freedoms of the frontier to influence and later improve society.

The second marriage Fuller addressed in detail in *Summer on the Lakes* was that

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[36] Fuller gave an extreme example of a father's support of his son in her account of the famous English settler Morris Birkbeck, who drowned following an accident, so his son might live. She wrote, "Many men can choose the right and best on a great occasion, but not many can, with such ready and serene decision, lay aside even life when it is right and best" (107).

of her boarding school classmate, Mariana.[37] This discussion included a reflection on death, as well, since Fuller learned of her friend's passing when she met Mariana's aunt in Chicago. In a lengthy digression, Fuller explained that Mariana, a half Spanish creole, was volatile and emotionally unstable. She wrote that her friend reminded her of a heroine from Louisa Sidney Stanhope's romance, *The Bandit's Bride*. Mariana had problems with her peers and instructors because of her eccentricity, and she experienced two separate health crises, though by the time she left school she had learned to conform, at least in appearance and outward demeanor. By then, she was also greatly humbled and of milder temperament (81-93). Fuller learned that after returning home, Mariana fell in love with and eventually married Sylvain, a man incapable of appreciating his wife for her true nature, unequal to her intellect, and oblivious to her need for companionship (94). "No compromise was possible between natures of such unequal poise," wrote Fuller, and "Sylvain became the kind but preoccupied husband, Mariana, the solitary and wretched wife" (96-7). Fuller explained that when Mariana fell ill, he showed concern, but he provided support only until she physically recovered, oblivious to her unresolved mental illness. Ultimately, Mariana had a relapse and died.[38] Mariana's spirit was incapable of surviving, let alone thriving, in such a marriage.

Fuller's reaction to her friend's early demise was one of regret that Mariana was not able to remain resilient when faced with despair. Sylvain, evidently, fully recovered from the loss of his wife, Fuller noted, since he "is married again to a fair and laughing girl who, will not die, probably, till their marriage grows a 'golden marriage'" (99). It was, therefore, not surprising that Fuller's digression on Mariana was not a consideration of the impact of a spouse's death on his or her surviving partner, as found in Kirkland and Farnham. She instead considered gender roles and societal expectations in the wake of this loss, noting, "But, oh! it is a curse to woman to love first, or most [for] in so doing

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[37] Mariana's story might be semi-fictional, for her experienced at boarding school mirrored many of Fuller's.

[38] Fish argues that Fuller "kills off" Mariana for dramatic effect (117) and includes the story of the Seeress of Prevorst because of the woman's tragic story and death. Certainly, both digressions contain elements of sentimental fiction.

she reverses the natural relations, and her heart can never, never be satisfied with what ensues," (94). Although she acknowledged Mariana's "weakness," she wrote that she "must ever think of her as a fine sample of womanhood, born to shed light and life on some palace home" (99). Were Mariana "a man of equal power, equal sincerity," she argued, he would have had more support if he were distressed, and the active life demanded of him would have sustained him, whereas a woman, who could not have such a life, was more vulnerable "to be quite wrecked through the affections only" (102). Mariana had an "ardent and too stimulated nature" (83) incompatible with ideal feminine behavior. Hers was "a mind whose large impulses [we]re disproportioned to the persons and occasions she me[t] and which carr[ied] her beyond those reserves which mark the appointed lot of woman" (103). In general, there was a "defect in the position of woman," Fuller noted, since "such women as Mariana are often lost, unless they meet some man of sufficiently great soul to prize them" (103). An ideal spouse for a woman like Mariana would be a visionary man. As Stephen Adams notes in "'That Tidiness We Always Look for in Woman,'" at the end of this chapter Fuller discussed two visionary men, Philip Van Artevelde and Morris Birkbeck. He argues that "Both represent types of men who might have redeemed Mariana by letting her grow and live up to her full potential," adding that "Van Artevelde becomes for Fuller a symbol of the ideal conjunction of opposite qualities" (262). Unfortunately, Mariana did not wed such a man, and her character traits, Fuller argued, in addition to her unhappy marriage with a man who did not "prize" her, led to her untimely death.

Scholars have many different interpretations of Fuller's story about Mariana. For example, in her work *The Land Before Her*, Annette Kolodny contends that Fuller's reflection on her friend's marriage and death contributed to her overarching views on the role of women on the frontier and "the poor fit [there] between individual ability and social role" (125-6). Furthermore, in *Transfiguring America,* Jeffrey Steele asserts that "Fuller constructs a reflective circle of shared grief [and] turns mourning into an act of feminist solidarity, molding collective loss into political sympathy" (153). Fish writes that Fuller's "narrative accounts of Mariana, Fanny P., the Seeress, and other travelers

reflect her yearning to travel out of bounds, into that wild zone where women make direct contact with nature and truth, translating other languages of desire" (109). And David Greven argues in "New Girls and Bandit Brides" that "In the book's Mariana episode, Fuller…comes as close as any antebellum author to articulating an explicit lesbian desire" (38). Clearly, the story of Mariana had extreme significance. Fuller certainly might have had repressed lesbian desire[39] or even realized homoerotic experiences during her time at boarding school, if one agrees Mariana was a semi-autobiographical character. Considering when she wrote *Summer on the Lakes* and her target audience, however, it was more likely that Fuller's consciously intended message, when writing about Mariana's tragic life and early death, specifically pertained to the rights of women. None of the women she wrote about in her digressions was from the frontier, nor did any of them live or even travel there, yet Fuller included them in her book. It is, therefore, also reasonable to strive to connect the significance of these women's experiences with the locations where Fuller traveled. Before drawing a conclusion, however, one must consider Fuller's commentary about Frederica Hauffe, Seeress of Prevorst.

Shortly after writing about Mariana, Fuller made her third digression in *Summer on the Lakes* when she included a summation and meditation on her reading of Dr. Justinus Kerner's 1829 work, *Die Seherin von Prevorst*. The amount of information she provided about Frederica Hauffe's marriage and death was minimal, compared to her discussions of Captain P. and his wife Fanny and Mariana and her husband Sylvain. Drawing from Kerner's book, she wrote that the Seeress was a German woman with supernatural abilities, including "prophetic dreams" and "sensibility to magnetic and ghostly influences" (135). She differed from her peers because she was intelligent and lively, yet "She had none of that sentimentality so common at that age." She also lacked a formal education in "any…of those branches now imparted to those of her sex in their schools," and "The Bible and hymn book were…her only reading" (136, 148). When she was nineteen, Frederica's family selected her husband, "Herr H.," "on account of the

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[39] Nicole Tonkovich also analyzes lesbian themes in the Mariana episode in *Domesticity with a Difference* on pages 175–77, 185, and 199–200.

excellence of the man and the sure provision it afforded for her comfort through life." Frederica "sank into a dejection" and was disconsolate after her engagement (136). After marrying and moving to her husband's hometown, a place that was "low, gloomy, shut in by hills; opposite in all the influences of earth and atmosphere to those of Prevorst and its vicinity," her condition eventually worsened. Fuller noted that in addition to her oppressive surroundings, the demands upon Frederica by her husband were considerable, for "Already withdrawn from the outward life, she was placed, where, as consort and housekeeper to a laboring man, the calls on her care and attention were incessant. She was obliged hourly to forsake her inner home to provide for an outer which did not correspond with it" (138). Whatever the specific triggers were, Frederica fell ill seven months after her wedding, and she suffered greatly for the remaining ten years of her life. When Kerner became the Seeress's physician, he was at first critical of her condition, a "somnambulic state," for it created "grief and trouble [for] her family" (143). Eventually, however, he came to accept that "She needed, not only a magnetizer, not only a love, an earnestness, an insight, such as scarce lies within the capacity of any man, but also what no mortal could bestow upon her, another heaven, other means of nourishment, other air than that of this earth" (151). At age twenty-nine, a decade after she married, Frederica passed away, leaving behind at least two children, another child having pre-deceased her. Fuller made no mention of Frederica's husband's reaction to his wife's death.

After setting aside the supernatural elements of the Seeress of Prevorst's story, the parallels between her and the women Fuller encountered on the frontier are striking. Even if the women Fuller met in the West played a role in determining who they married to an extent that Frederica did not, many of them, like the Seeress, were transplanted to locations that did not suit them and left to struggle, as best they could, to adapt. Frederica's tragic tale was a drastic example of the issues Fuller identified as challenges for women in antebellum America, especially those who moved to the frontier. Her life was full of the types of women's challenges Fuller addressed throughout *Summer on the Lakes*: Her education was inadequate and unsuited for her life circumstances, her spouse proved indifferent or oblivious to her needs, and she struggled to meet the incessant

demands of her family. Fuller summarized her impression of Frederica by noting, "Certainly, I think he would be dull, who could see no meaning or beauty in the history of the forester's daughter of Prevorst" (165). Her use of the word "beauty" echoed her comment about the "moral beauty" of the story of Captain P. and Fanny.[40] As Adams contends, *Summer on the Lakes* encompasses "the wider theme of an ideal junction of opposites that cannot last—that ends in disappointment, anticlimax, and wasted potential" (252). In sum, Fuller's inclusion of these three digressions, two of which involved the deaths of married women, appears to align with her concerns about the rights of women, specifically, and the impact of the frontier on America, generally. What Fish calls a "wild zone" could be Fuller's hope for a future where women like Mariana and Frederica could thrive, rather than die. She envisioned the potential for a "new, original, enchanting" kind of elegance for Western women (63).

Fuller eventually addressed the subject of marriage at length in her next book, *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*. In it, she argued that women should have intellectual and religious freedom equal to men's, and she called upon society to "Ascertain the true destiny of woman, give her legitimate hopes, and a standard within herself; marriage and all other relations would by degrees be harmonized with these" (22), noting, "What woman needs is not as a woman to act or rule, but as a nature to grow, as an intellect to discern, as a soul to live freely and unimpeded, to unfold such powers as were given her when we left our common home" (27). In light of this philosophy, Adams' assertion that Philip van Artevelde was "…for Fuller a symbol of the ideal conjunction of opposite qualities" (262) seems valid. Van Artevelde was a fourteenth century Flemish statesman, and Fuller indicated that she had read Henry Taylor's 1834 play about him and reread the work in Chicago after learning of Mariana's death. Taylor's depiction clearly captured Fuller's imagination, and she noted that Van Artevelde would have been a suitable husband for her friend, since Elena, his beloved, was similar to Mariana, with "…a mind

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[40] Fuller added that Frederica "lived but nine-and-twenty years, yet, in that time, had traversed a larger portion of the field of thought than all her race before, in their many and long lives" (165).

whose large impulses are disproportioned to the persons and occasions she meets, and which carry her beyond those reserves which mark the appointed lot of woman" (103). Fuller added that the United States would benefit from a man like Van Artevelde,

> …no thin Idealist, no coarse Realist, but a man whose eye reads the heavens while his feet step firmly on the ground, and his hands are strong and dexterous for the use of human implements. A man religious, virtuous and—sagacious; a man of universal sympathies, but self-possessed; a man who knows the region of emotion, though he is not its slave; a man to whom this world is no mere spectacle, or fleeting shadow, but a great solemn game to be played with good heed, for its stakes are of eternal value, yet who, if his own play be true, heeds not what he loses by the falsehood of others. (103-4)

In consideration of the masculine qualities Fuller extolled in *Summer on the Lakes*, Van Artevelde apparently fulfilled all of the qualities Fuller identified for the ideal man of the frontier.

Compared to the complexity of Fuller's depictions and commentary on marriage and death on the frontier, Eliza Steele's views as she described them in *A Summer Journey in the West* were quite simplistic: she apparently endorsed the Cult of Domesticity, or True Womanhood. Her book does, however, have an overarching theme that resonates with the writings of Kirkland and Farnham. Her comments about her own marriage comprise a good starting point for discussion. Steele, who married when she was forty, rarely commented about her spouse, Joseph, an Englishman. Only referring to him as "my husband" once in her book, she usually called him "my companion." Evidently, Steele was suffering from some health issues when she travelled to the West, for she indicated they took their trip for "information and health" (70), and she later reiterated she was "travelling for health" (188). She depicted her husband as solicitous, yet not overbearing. For example, though she was eager to see Niagara Falls as soon as they arrived, he told her she must first take tea, "much to the annoyance of my impatient spirit" (54), perhaps because he was concerned for her strength. Later in their journey, she wrote that he and the other gentlemen in their party attended church, but the women

(the "weaker part") stayed in their hotel to rest (277). Steele made sure to note, however, that her husband awakened her when they were traveling by stage, lest she miss an especially beautiful view of the prairie (125). The two had common interests, such as a shared fascination with geology (142, 170), and they both enjoyed traveling by steamboat on Lake Erie, where their accommodations were superior. Sometimes, their cultural differences were a source of amusement for her, such as when her husband was astonished when people borrowed his personal book onboard their craft without asking his permission. She wrote, "My companion had never been used to such *socialisms* [italics per original] in his country, and was quite amused at this free and easy sort of thing (116). Theirs was, evidently, an amicable marriage with elements of partnership. Of course, if Leverenz found Kirkland's description of her marriage superficial, he would, undoubtedly, disapprove even more so of Steele's characterization. Given her status as an elite, genteel traveler, Steele probably was intentionally circumspect.

Steele was less demure when describing other married couples, and she was noticeably more critical of families she perceived as lower in social standing, intellect, cleanliness, or morality. For example, at one point on her journey, she observed a husband and wife who made a very poor impression on her when they argued in public about whether or not alcoholic beverages should be served at meals on the steamboat. The wife, Steele wrote, "had lately become a convert to temperance cause was extremely offended at the sight of spirits upon the dining table," but her husband believed it was appropriate to serve alcohol, since the boat's drinking water was impure and, he contended, the consumption of liquor fortified the stomach from "fever and ague." The couple's discussion dissolved into a "high argument" that stopped only after the intervention of a fellow passenger—a woman from Kentucky whom Steele described as a pipe smoker who had lived several years upon the river and "rejoiced to see a slave again" when one boarded the steamboat. Steele remarked, "[O]ur old woman put her head in at the door, and taking out her pipe, after slowly puffing her smoke, uttered this oracular sentence" 'For my part, I think there are lots of gnats strained at, and lots of camels swallowed'" (167). This observation interrupted the couple's heated exchange,

though Steele clearly disapproved of their behavior. The couple was so uncouth, a woman of questionable background corrected them. Steele also indicated that the husband had poor judgment when she noted that he "left the argument for the card table," where the steamboat's card shark quickly fleeced him. Overall, Steele's depiction of this married couple served less as a caution against the types of discord that can emerge when husband and wife differed in their views on fundamentals like religion or temperance than a warning to fellow travelers not to engage in such vulgar behavior.

Like Kirkland, Farnham, and Fuller, Steele commented about married couples she met who relocated from the East to the frontier, and she reflected on the outcome of their decisions. She was far less forthcoming in her assessment of their marriages, however, than her fellow authors, and she was usually more conservative in her views. For example, she met a family who moved to the West and prospered. The husband, she wrote, was originally from New York, "one of a large family straightened means" who married young and struggled "to support his family respectably" (93). Resolving to relocate to the frontier, with only "a mere trifle in money," he purchased land, and as others settled in the area, he became the owner of an entire "little village," complete with houses, a church, a tavern, and a sawmill. Steele clearly admired him for his success, noting, "His children are married and settled around him; and he is, as he expressed himself, 'independent of the world.'" She learned that he preferred life on the frontier to that of the city, "where," he stated, "each man models his conduct upon that of his neighbor, and dare not act as his spirit prompts him." This man had the stereotypical qualities Steele identified as the masculine ideal for the region—characteristics that women could not aspire to or achieve, in this era. Of note, though Steele wrote that she related this family's story for the edification of her audience, she said nothing specific about the man's wife or children. She did not comment about their relationships at all, instead making the general observation, "How much better is this state of things than to remain, struggling for a morsel, among the hungry crowd of a large city" (94). By implication, those husbands who were prosperous in the city had few valid incentives to move their households away from civilization.

Other families Steele met on the frontier had suffered greatly because of their decision to relocate. Steele observed, "Most of the emigrants we have met with…hear the west spoken of as a great, rich, and rising country; pull up their household by the roots, and, 'westward hold their way.'" While visiting Peoria, Illinois, she asked a woman in a cottage for some water, and remarking that she and her children appeared ill, she "asked her the cause, and heard a sad story of fever and ague sickness." The woman explained that she and her family moved to Illinois from Pennsylvania, where "Her husband was a carpenter, who had sufficient employment where they had lived, and there they were well and happy," but "he heard of the west, where every one is sure to get rich, and so he came." Steele must not have spoken with the husband, for she made no mention of him. Her complimentary remarks about the appearance of the cottage and the hospitality of the wife indicate she admired this family, as did her comments about the American spirit. Steele reflected, "I believe no one but our people can thus readily leave their homes, and the graves of their fathers to seek a residence in new and untried regions" (151-2). She drew upon her religion to come to terms with the flow of peoples to the West, noting that the emigrants reminded her of "the Hebrews plucked up from an over-grown country, and led with an Almighty hand, to the land of promise," and she then expressed a wish, "May these travelers, study the eventful journey of the Palestine emigrants, and shun those errors by which they were driven forth from its fair fields" (153). Whereas the family in the cottage met with her approval, and she might have compared them to the Hebrews, the next one she met clearly did not, and she might have likened them to Philistines.

Later in her journey, Steele encountered a family on her steamboat who were "making a retrograde motion to the east" because of the poor health they suffered after moving to the frontier. The couple and their two sons made an unfavorable impression on her because the wife, in Steele's view, was not sufficiently submissive to her husband. Compared to the previous family she met in Peoria, with their "neat cottage on the bank"

and hospitable hostess (151), Steele was quite critical of them.[41] Steele learned that the husband "had been a shop keeper in the State of New York, who experiencing some reverses, was persuaded to remove to this golden region by his spouse, who was now no longer able to lead the village fashions" (156). She evidently disapproved that this wife exerted so much influence over her husband, for she reflected, "I am convinced a little prudence and knowledge, will keep many 'healthy, wealthy, and wise' who without it are easily discouraged, fall into difficulties, and wish to try a new place." In this respect, she and Farnham apparently agreed that wives should not domineer their husbands, for Farnham's impressions of the Andrews and the Esculapiuses were equally poor. Steele added, "We have met many upon the road, who have nearly equalled the old woman on the prairie, who had begun the world seven times" (157). In other words, this wife was foolish and ignorant and worthy of scorn for deeming the temporary inability of her husband to ensure she remained a "village trend setter" sufficient reason to relocate her family from a comfortable, if not wealthy, living.

Steele's views of marriage became somewhat clearer through a lengthy recounting of the story of a young, recently eloped couple she met while traveling by steamboat. Through her interactions with the newlyweds, her bias toward wealthy, well-mannered individuals also became more apparent. She explained that a "mysterious couple" initially caused quite a stir on the steamboat, for the husband took great care to ensure that nobody saw his wife, "a young girl, apparently about fourteen" (209), who never left their stateroom. In contrast to the Indianan and his bride whom Farnham encountered, Steele observed that the groom was extremely solicitous. For example, she described his actions after the steamboat's water wheel hit a log, noting that he carried his wife from their stateroom, intent on rescuing her, until he discovered she was not in peril. Steele related this event in dramatic fashion: "When the noise [of the log hitting the paddles] was first heard, the young man rushed out, bearing a plump rosy young girl in his arms who, as soon as he put her down, began to tell the beads of a long rosary which

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[41] This is the same family that urged her to feel their malaria-stricken son's enlarged spleen.

hung from her neck" (213). After the bride's husband went to look at the damage to the water wheel, Steele explained that she approached the young woman and strived to "sooth" her. Upon the groom's return, she wrote, "we all sat down and were soon as social as old friends" (214).

Steele's class and regional biases were evident in her interaction with the newlyweds. Once she became acquainted with the couple, she learned that the newlyweds "were now on their way to New York, and [the bride] was so fearful of being recognized and brought back [by her parents to Kentucky], that she would not at first leave her state-room" (220). Based on the young man's attire, which, presumably, was not that of "southerners in their thin pink and purple or blue striped coats" (219), and the couple's intended destination, New York, Steele also, apparently, made an incorrect assumption that the groom was from the East. The young woman's parents, wealthy plantation owners from Kentucky, had sent her to a convent for schooling. There, to their dismay, she converted from Presbyterianism to Catholicism, intent on becoming a nun.[42] Before entering the novitiate, she fell in love with Edward, the visiting brother of a schoolmate, and the two eloped. Steele seemed quite taken with this "romantic adventure" (229).[43] Her protectiveness of the bride was unmistakable, for she feared how the young woman's father and mother, Southerners, would treat her.

When the bride's parents arrived and boarded the steamboat, the young woman came to Steele for protection, hiding her head in her lap. Steele wrote that she "looked towards the door with much anxiety, for I had heard the southern planters were a gouging, raw head and bloody bones sort of people, who whipped a slave to death once a week, and I feared for the fate of the poor young wife." Once she met them, however, she was dismissive of the various things she had heard about Southerners, noting that her information "had been taken from *foreign* tourists [italics mine], and I found this idea like

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[42] Steele commented she had no issue with Catholics, but in her opinion, the bride's "parents were well punished for the culpable step they had taken in placing their child where she was likely to embrace a religion different from their own" (220).

[43] This story reads like an excerpt of sentimental fiction, though Steele protested, "Pray do not think I made this out of my fertile brain, I assure you it is true" (230).

many others I had imbibed from them, was far from truth." Describing the bride's parents in glowing terms, she remarked that the father was "a pleasant, good humored looking man" and "His wife, a tall, slender, ladylike looking personage" (228). She soon learned that the couple's elopement was part of an elaborate ruse. Edward, the groom, worked in concert with his father-in-law to ensure his wife left the convent to elope with him. His primary motivation for marriage was financial: His parents were friends with her parents, and the prospect of inheriting a plantation inspired him to "scale the convent and carry her off" (229).

Her first impressions were so positive, Steele overlooked a number of clues that possibly indicated that all might not be right in this family. Although she noted a "most unbecoming smirk" on the groom's face, and the "reproachful" expression of the bride's mother in reaction to her husband's mirth, upon seeing his daughter so fearful of his arrival, she did not delve deeper into motives and recriminations, as Kirkland, Farnham, and Fuller might have done in a similar situation. Instead, Steele ultimately dismissed the couple's story as "a romantic adventure" that was "after the fashion of travelling heroines," since the bride, whom she never named, was not indignant upon learning of her father's efforts, rather running "like a fawn into her father's outstretched arms." She did not appear troubled that Edward married with financial gain in mind, rather than love for his wife or, at least, a strong sense of compatibility. Truly, Steele appeared to be overwhelmed by the wealth and gentility of the plantation owner and his wife. She noted upon their departure,

> I received kind expressions and adieus from all, and a few tears from the bride. All pressed us to visit them, and the father said if we would only come to Big Bloody Bone Buffalo Lick, he would show us the finest blue grass fields, best corn and tobacco, and heartiest negroes in all old Kentuck. And if I wanted a nice young girl to wait upon me, I should have the pick of all his slaves. (229)

Perhaps Steele would have been critical of the machinations of the father and his son-in-law were the family members from the East, rather than Southerners (229, 219). As her interaction with this family indicated, displays of charm and wealth readily

influenced her when she encountered experiences outside of her personal sphere. In addition, she was, possibly, simply too conservative in her religious views to consider the advancement of rights of women, for example, as an acceptable goal. Her bias toward wealthy elites tended to color her impressions, regardless. Some of this bias was evident in the ways she depicted death in her book.

Steele addressed death of family members in three instances in *A Summer Journey in the West*. First, she related a story of a newly-engaged young woman who died after slipping into the water at Trenton Falls, New York. The "young girl" was sightseeing with her fiancé and her parents. The fiancé urged his betrothed to hold fast to his hand and be cautious as they approached the overlook. "Gaily they [the engaged couple] descended stairs and clambered the rocks," Steele wrote, but "being thus led along, did not accord her playful spirit, and telling [her fiancé] she could take care of herself, she in an evil moment withdrew her hand." Tragically, the woman fell to her death. After she disappeared, her fiancé assumed she had "hid herself in play" or walked over to where her parents were seated. "Oh, the agony of those hearts as they stood beside that dark torrent, away from all help, and powerless to save their beloved one" (33), Steele reflected. Her message was clear: The fiancée should have taken every precaution, tamed her impetuous nature, and followed her fiancé's lead.

To underscore the treacherous locale, Steele mentioned another incident where an eleven-year-old girl drowned after the valet who was carrying her slipped and fell into the river. Dwelling upon this story, Steele wrote that became fearful for her husband's safety, urging him to step away from the overlook. "As I stood upon the slippery rock, while these events were floating through my memory," Steele remarked, "their scenes pointed out to me by the guide; the place lost all its beauty, and the dashing torrent seemed some huge monster, seeking whom he might suck beneath his horrid depths." She concluded that God, perhaps, commanded these deaths as a reminder to other of "the uncertain hold they have upon life, and all its pleasures, and to fear that power which can in an unlooked moment, bear them from life to eternity" (33-4). If fellow wealthy tourists could suffer mishaps, even in the care of their servants, Steele realized that so,

too, could she and her husband.

Steele had a personal experience with death that differed from Kirkland, Farnham, and Fuller: One of the people she met while en route to Rochester, New York died in the hotel where they were all staying. She described how she met "the Rev[erend] N. T—r" of Massachusetts and his daughter as they traveled from Utica. The Reverend was "about seventy, but extremely active, and very cheerful," and he made a positive impression on Steele, not only for his "instructive and agreeable" conversation, "piety," "kindness of manner," and his "simplicity of heart," but also for his forty-seven years' service in his ministry. When the Reverend's daughter summoned the Steeles late that evening with a message that her father had taken ill, they arrived at the family's rooms shortly after midnight to find out that the Reverend had expired. Given she and her husband had only met the minister and his daughter earlier the previous day, it is somewhat striking the young woman summoned them to her father's deathbed.[44] She described the scene: "Upon the bed, lay a silent corpse, whose countenance bespoke a death of agony—it was all that now remained of that good and kind old man, that tender father, whose refined manners and intellectual conversation, had charmed us so much the day before." She again drew upon her religion for consolation, noting that the Reverend might "died far from his home, with no friends near him except his daughter—his last hour passed away in a hotel among strangers—yet spare your sympathy, for he died happy" (41, 44-5). For Steele, religion was a constant source of inspiration, consolation, and guidance. Whether a traveler slipped and fell into a raging river or sickened and died at a five-star hotel, far from all he held dear, she reminded her readers that death was a constant, and one should always be spiritually prepared for it, even on holiday.

Caroline Kirkland's, Eliza Farnham's, Margaret Fuller's, and Eliza Steele's respective works, *A New Home, Who'll Follow?*, *Life in Prairie Land*, *Summer on the Lakes*, and *A Summer Journey in the West*, each contained reflections on marriage and

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[44] While Steele did not dwell on this point, her account undoubtedly underscored to her readers that the support of fellow travelers or the local communities was essential while undertaking lengthy journeys.

family dynamics, such as illness and death—subjects deemed appropriate for women writers of their era. Whereas Kirkland's esteem for marriages that were partnerships became clear to her readers through various vignettes that appeared over the course of her book, Farnham and Fuller specifically used their works to consider the rights of women and advocate for change. Steele, in contrast, supported far more traditional views on marriage and the role of women.[45] She viewed the home as the location missionaries should target their efforts to evangelize the Great Lakes region and to effect tangible change in the region's prevailing culture (127). Each of the authors considered what qualities defined the masculine ideal in the context of life in the West. They also commented on the ways relocating to the frontier impacted on families and, especially, women. Kirkland, Farnham, and Fuller, however, made further use of topics from the domestic sphere to address larger concerns, such as the greater permeability of social boundaries in the West, in the case of Kirkland, and the potential for life in the Great Lakes region to spur improvements in women's education and independence, in the case of Farnham and Fuller. The authors' comments served as indications of their greater concerns about the role of women,[46] as well as their anxieties about the possible negative

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[45] Steele might have been the only one of the four writers to visit a progressive female seminary during her travels and to write about it in her book, but she confined her observations to how the school could best prepare young women for their domestic responsibilities. Apparently, she was too firmly entrenched in her status as a member of the elite to consider more fully the possibilities of what she observed during her travels. Whereas visiting the seminary was something Steele probably considered part of her support of missionary activities, one should note that Kirkland and Fuller did visit such places in the Northeast as part of their work with press publications, such as *Knickerbocker Magazine* for Kirkland and *The Dial* for Fuller. Fuller discussed the educational curriculum at women's seminaries in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century* (83-4). Furthermore, Farnham was appointed matron of the women's ward at Sing Sing Prison and was well known for her innovative views on prisoner rehabilitation. See Janet Floyd's "Dislocations of the Self: Eliza Farnham at Sing Sing Prison" for more information.

[46] Halverson notes that many female authors "render the home as a platform for female autonomy, resistance, and imagination rather than sacrifice and obligation," adding that "By playing with domestic and textual conventions, they reconfigure their western

impact westward expansion could have on the country if the region continued to develop without sufficient numbers of refined women to exert appropriate, much-needed influence. By demonstrating to their target audience members the various ways they were able to make a positive impact on the people they encountered, whether as settlers or as travelers, they showed that it was possible for women to help to align the prevailing social values of the region so they were more in keeping with those of the Northeast.

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settings…[as] liberating and challenging terrains where in which new versions of female individuality and subjectivity can be crafted" (4).

Chapter Four: How Un-American:
Foreigners and "Savages" in the Upper Midwest

In the course of *A New Home*, *Life in Prairie Land*, *Summer on the Lakes*, and *A Summer Journey in the West*, what Kirkland, Farnham, Fuller, and Steele wrote about people of different nationalities and races indicated they were conflicted in how they viewed them. As Carl Thompson notes in *Travel Writing* "…travel accounts often illuminate the mental maps that individuals and cultures have of the world and its inhabitants, and the larger matrix of prejudices, fantasies and assumptions that they bring to bear on any encounter with, or description of, the Other" (136).[1] This is certainly the case for the four authors' books. Each of the four authors wrote about her experiences in a "contact zone," which Mary Louise Pratt defines in her book, *Imperial Eyes*, as places where two (or more) cultures meet and share, albeit unequally, cultural material (7). While Pratt was writing about Europeans who traveled to colonial lands, a contact zone certainly existed on the western frontier of the United States in the 1840s,[2] and all four authors had the opportunity to observe and interact with the American Indians who remained in the region, as well as foreign emigrants.[3] Given the indications in their

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[1] Thompson uses the capitalized "Other" in his example. For the purposes of this project, I use Eileen Groom's definition of "Other" from her book *Methods for Teaching Travel Literature and Writing*, namely, "'Other,' capitalized, refers to a constructed and imaginary, homogenous and essentialized idea of 'other,' such idea customary in nineteenth-century thinking" (27). As Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin note in *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*, "…many critics use the spellings ['Other' and 'other'] interchangeably, so that the Empires construction of its 'others' is often referred to as the construction of 'the Other'(perhaps to connote an abstract and generalized but more symbolic representation of empire's 'others').

[2] Brigitte Georgi-Findley notes in her introduction to *The Frontiers of Women's Writing* that "…the American rhetoric of westward expansion is, in a more global sense, part of Western colonialist discourses" (26). She considers the West of the 1830s to 1840s as "a contact zone where the history of racial conflict has already been suppressed or sublimated" (30).

[3] Pratt also uses the term found in her book's title, "imperial eyes" to suggest how the imperial gaze of the European or European-American others and codifies indigenous peoples (17). The writings of Kirkland, Farnham, Fuller, and Steele contain evidence of this imperial gaze when they discussed American Indians. They each wrote about the

books that they considered some of the Americans they met who were from different regions and classes as uncouth, if not contemptible, it is not surprising that they viewed American Indians and emigrants from Europe as suspect. Their comments about the impact of the influx of newly arrived emigrants, the fate of the American Indians, and the role of American Indian women served as indications of greater concerns they had about the possibly negative effect rapid settlement of the West could have on national character, should sufficient numbers of genteel settlers and travelers not offset the less desirables.

Kirkland occasionally mentioned European emigrants in *A New Home*. Surprised by the number of people from Europe who lived in Michigan, she speculated why they came to the United States. The various classes of these emigrants mirrored those of the Euro-Americans in the region, but Kirkland indicated that their attitudes differed from those of their new countrymen, and she and others in the community of Montacute perceived them as outsiders.[4] She specifically discussed emigrants from England, noting there were various types. Nancy Walker argues in *The Disobedient Writer* that Kirkland corrected the myth of the frontier by depicting "those whom it disappoints either because the supposed 'freedom' is illusory or because some have interpreted freedom as the right to dispense with moral scruples and make others their victims" (100). This is certainly true: Kirkland's writing indicated that individual freedom, even on the frontier, was subject to social strictures. She demonstrated that societal pressures functioned to keep most extremes of behavior at least partially in check. As Cathryn Halverson notes in *Playing House in the American West*, one of the reasons Kirkland focused on frontier domesticity in her writing was because she saw it as tenuous (18).

Describing various types of English settlers, Kirkland wrote that there were those individuals who were "somewhat apt in bargaining to overreach even the wary pumpkin-

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forthcoming extinction of American Indians with varying degrees of moral callousness, noting it as a matter of fact. Moreover, the way some of these writers viewed Europeans also could be with an American nationalist, ethnocentric variation of this gaze.

[4] Each of the four authors engaged in "othering." For the purposes of this project, I use Thompson's definition of "othering," namely, "the processes and strategies by which one culture depicts another culture as not only different but also inferior to itself" (132-3).

eaters." Kirkland grouped this type of emigrant with the few American Indians who remained in the area, derogatorily commenting that they surpassed them in their aggressive bartering and haggling while further noting they lived close enough to them to be "their neighbours" (234). She regarded this class of English settlers as on par with the lowest class of Americans who resided in the area. As she and the other middle- and upper-class people in the area attempted to influence and to impose order on lower class fellow countrymen, so too, did they attempt to rein in uncouth foreigners. Kirkland noted that there were also Englishmen on the frontier who were continually striving "to add to their lands…and to make the most of their crops." These individuals were "close, penurious, grasping and indefatigable" in their pursuit of wealth, she wrote. This wording echoed her remarks about certain land speculators and dishonest bankers like Mr. Rivers, whom she criticized throughout *A New Home.* Kirkland condemned these individuals for their ruthless, unscrupulous business practices (205). She further indicated that there were some English emigrants who evidently found the realities of rural living "so *foreign* [italics mine] and so unsuitable that one cannot but wonder that the vagaries of fortune should have sent them into so uncongenial an atmosphere." They were not only aloof, but some also did not personally engage in farming or commerce, instead hiring others to work their lands. Their negative attitude, Kirkland observed, was what differentiated them from families like the Hastings. Whereas the Hastings were Americans from New York who fit in well in the community, and Mr. Hastings successfully ran for public office to serve the community as a whole (316), Kirkland indicated that wealthy English emigrants "become at once the objects of suspicion and dislike" because they "generally live retired, and they appear to show little inclination to mingle with their rustic neighbors." The perception from American members of the community was that they held themselves above their neighbors even more so than Kirkland and her peers from New England, who were part of the area's elite.[5] Kirkland

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[5] Georgi-Findley examines this passage of *A New Home* and cites it as an example of Kirkland "…defin[ing] herself against another class of settlers, 'refined; people of faded wealth" (36), but she does not acknowledge that these individuals whom Kirkland

approved of the social pressure lower-class individuals in Montacute exerted on these haughty persons. Certainly, her negative attitude toward these European emigrants also indicated that she and her neighbors were ethnocentric, but it also demonstrated concerns she had about the impact a large influx of foreigners in the Great Lakes region could have on the country as a whole.

Kirkland especially criticized wealthier Englishmen and women who "…appear to have forsaken the old world, either in consequence of some temporary disgust, or through romantic notions of the liberty to be enjoyed in this favoured land" (103). She commented that the "better classes of English settlers" were often disappointed when they discovered American freedom did not mean total independence (235). For these exclusivists,

> it is with feelings of angry surprise that they learn after a short residence here, that this very universal freedom abridges their own liberty to do as they please in their individual capacity; that the absolute democracy which prevails in country places, imposes as heavy restraints upon one's free-will in some particulars, as do the over-bearing pride and haughty distinctions of the old world in others…. (235).

Kirkland noted that these emigrants soon became bitter and disenchanted with their adopted country, and their "sour discontent" alienated "the few who were kindly inclined toward the stranger." When the community discovered that a wealthy Englishman and woman were having an extra-marital affair, much drama ensued. Kirkland, for a change, did not criticize Mrs. Nippers, the town gossip, when she remarked, "The way Mrs. Nippers rolls up her eyes when the English are mentioned is certainly a caution" (243). The warning, apparently, was not just for husbands and wives to honor their marriage vows but also a reminder that even on the frontier, there was an expectation people would comply with social norms. Because the individuals who engaged in an extra-marital affair were English, they were subjected to added scrutiny and scorn. In "an American back-woods settlement," she noted, "The principle of 'let-a-be for let-a-be' holds not with

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criticized were European emigrants. One might also consider that she singled them out because they were not Americans.

us" (234).

Kirkland had limited encounters with American Indians during the years she lived in Montacute. The 1836 Treaty of Washington following the Black Hawk War resulted in the forced relocation of the peoples who originally lived in the area of Michigan that Kirkland's husband developed into the township. She resided near what remained of a "contact zone," further defined by Pratt as "...social spaces where disparate cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in highly asymmetrical relations of domination and subordination" (7). Of note, Kirkland wrote that she originally wanted to give Montacute an Indian place name, perhaps in an effort to preserve some of the heritage of the area's original occupants.[6] She wrote that her husband and his fellow investors rejected her idea, instead choosing a name by lot among a selection "of the most sounding names [Kirkland] could muster from [her] novel reading stores" (23), thereby demonstrating the limited value they placed on her input.[7]

Kirkland's comments about American Indians provided further insight into her view that Montacute was "on the outskirts of civilization" (8). Although Halverson asserts that "Any portrayal of native culture and politics that might have appeared in *A New Home* is displaced by a compulsive detailing of intrarace class relations…." (26), this assessment does not acknowledge the instances of interaction with American Indians that Kirkland included in her book. Admittedly, her dealings with American Indians were few, and while Kirkland was not vicious, her writing reflected the prevailing, casual racism of her era. Nevertheless, the ways she depicted them highlighted her opinions on topics such as what kind of impact the westward expansion of the United States might have on them and what constituted proper behavior for European-American women on the frontier. An incident that occurred early in *A New Home* contained examples of her characterization of American Indians as different, and her descriptions provided further

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[6] Halverson notes that Kirkland's attempt to preserve Indian place names "reinforces the era's familiar notion of a necessarily vanishing race [American Indians]" (21).

[7] In fact, Montacute was really named Pinckney in honor of Kirkland's brother-in-law. Still, Kirkland's explanation of how her input was received and redirected by her husband and his associates provided insight into her impression her opinion was not valued.

insight into her desire to enforce certain standards of behavior.

While the Kirklands were conducting their reconnaissance of the area in Michigan where they eventually settled, her husband and the rest of the members of his land-scouting party stayed in the house of a French Canadian trader and his American Indian wife. Kirkland related a second-hand account of the group's night with the family, based on what her husband told her about his experience. According to Kirkland, the men in her husband's group initially found the sight of the Indian dwellings near the trader's home reassuring, for the structures "gave some relief to the extreme solitariness of the scene." The trader, who lived near some "Indian huts," also made a favorable first impression, though his wife seemed aloof, "declining conversation, or indeed notice of any sort unless when called on to perform the part of interpreter between the gentlemen and some wretched looking Indians who were hanging about the house" (50). The willingness of the trader to sell alcohol to the Indians, however, eventually became a point of contention. During the night, the Indians who lived near the trader twice came to his home to purchase whiskey. They announced their second visit with what Kirkland described as "a hideous yelling, which to city ears could be no less than an Indian war-whoop," terrifying the scouting party. Their reaction sharply contrasted with that of the trader,[8] who merely "admit[ted] one of the Indians coolly," supplied them with more whiskey, and sent them on their way after admonishing them for disturbing his guests.

By emphasizing the differences between the trader and the scouting party, Kirkland provided a possible explanation why his reaction to the Indians' drunken demands for more alcohol was quite different from theirs. The trader was French Canadian, so he was not from an Anglo-Saxon country. Furthermore, he was married to

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[8] Kirkland wrote that when they heard the yelling of the Indians, "Every one [of the party] was on foot in an instant; and the confusion which ensued in the attempt to dress in the dark was most perplexing." The scouting party's members were so fearful that their "[T]error had reached its acmé,—and every one catching at something which could be used as a weapon" (51).

an American Indian woman, and he engaged in commerce with her kinsmen.[9] Rather than being scared by the "war-whoop," he told Kirkland and his colleagues that the commotion outside was "nothing at all." Though he "spoke to the desperate looking savage very sharply, evidently reprobating in no gentle terms the uproar which had disturbed the sleepers," he truly did not understand why Kirkland's husband and his colleagues were worried, let alone terrified. Presumably, Kirkland's husband and the other members of the scouting party strongly objected to the practice of selling any whiskey to the Indians, whatsoever. Their concerned attitude greatly contrasted to the nonchalance of the French Canadian trader. "[T]he Frenchman," Kirkland wrote, "seemed to look upon it as a thing of course, and unblushingly vindicated his own agency in the matter" (52), contending if he did not supply the alcohol, the Indians would simply find another source.

Although the trader disagreed with them on the point of alcohol sales, Kirkland wrote that her husband told her that the man did make certain to inform them that the Indians were untrustworthy—at least, to people like them (European-Americans). The trader said he did not have any problems, personally, but he told the scouting party that "they [the Indians] would steal anything they could lay their hands on from the farmers who lived within reach of their settlements," and he added that some of the white settlers had complained of vegetables being stolen from their gardens (50-2). Presumably, the thieves were Indians, and the trader's ties to the tribe through his marriage and his ability to "sp[eak] to the Indian in his own tongue" (50-2) granted him a measure of immunity that European-American settlers did not enjoy. If the trader were attempting to advise the scouting party on a better way to interact with the American Indians (e.g., integrating with American Indian families, rather than enforcing relocation westward or mandating efforts to "civilize" them), his advice and methods were too subtle for them to notice, and

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[9] Kirkland discussed this French Canadian far more than the hunter she encountered when she first arrived on the frontier. As discussed in Chapter One, her encounter with that man focused more on his courtesy than his nationality. Perhaps because the hunter exhibited courtesy and decorum, Kirkland was more willing to overlook his foreign nationality.

Kirkland certainly did not comment on the implication.

While Kirkland was describing her husband's initial experience during the scouting expedition, she emphasized the status of the trader, his wife, their children, and his wife's kinsmen, as "other" while specifically criticizing the trader's wife for her inhospitality. Throughout her comments of the trader and his family, Kirkland differentiated his children and his wife from European-Americans. She evoked animal imagery when she wrote that the boys and girls were half American Indian with "bright, gazelle-like eyes," contrasting their behavior to children of full European-American ancestry and adding that they "were visible at intervals, but exhibited nothing of the staring curiosity which is seen peeping from among the sun-bleached locks of the whiter broods of the same class of settlers." As for the trader's wife, in addition to characterizing her as aloof, Kirkland noted that the woman acted noticeably friendlier to an American Indian man (presumably, a kinsman) who delivered furs to the trader. She received this man "with some animation" unlike her "grave and dignified" demeanor as "mistress of the mansion." Kirkland further critiqued the woman's limited interaction with her husband's scouting party, commenting that "His lady [the trader's wife] listened with no pleased aspect to this discussion of the foibles of her countrymen and seemed quite willing to expedite the departure of the guests" (52). Of course, these assumptions were all based on the woman's bearing and facial expressions, for she never said anything to confirm what Kirkland's husband and the other members of the scouting party inferred from her non-verbal communication.

Kirkland and, presumably, her husband made their assumptions about the trader's wife's behavior and that of the other American Indians they encountered based on European-American social norms. For example, she evaluated the woman's performance as a hostess using her own standards for what constituted genteel behavior. Since diplomacy was a man's traditional role for the American Indian tribes of the Upper Midwest (Child 38), it was unremarkable the trader's wife did not interact much with the members of the scouting party, though Kirkland might have been unfamiliar with this cultural difference. Kirkland also did not consider that the trader's wife simply might not

have felt very comfortable speaking with strangers present. Oddly, when Kirkland wrote that cranberry preserves and maple syrup made the scouting party's dinner at the trader's house "quite luxurious," she did not acknowledge the trader's wife undoubtedly harvested and prepared these items—an instance in which the cultural roles of American Indian and European-American women at least partially overlapped. She instead wrote that the foodstuffs were "furnished by the settlers," basically eliminating the woman's role, altogether. Perhaps because the woman did not comply fully with European-American social norms for proper behavior of a hostess, Kirkland discounted her contributions to the comfort of the scouting party.

Another example of Kirkland applying her own social standards to American Indians occurred after she has lived in Montacute for a while, when she described her interactions with individuals who were trading fruit. She remarked on the American Indians' appearance, but she did not, apparently, discern who was "in charge" during these encounters. She wrote that the group's appearance was striking: The men with their "immense quantities [of berries] slung in panniers or mococks of bark on the sides of their wild-looking ponies" and "a squaw, with any quantity of pappooses, usually riding *a l'Espagnole* on the ridge between them." She did not appreciate nor recognize the empowerment of the American Indian women, here. In this instance, accompanied by men, American Indian women negotiated trade of berries (their property, since they harvested agricultural commodities) for flour.[10] Rather than discerning this cultural difference, Kirkland was sarcastic. After listing the prevailing prices for various fruits, venison, ponies, and other items the Indians brought to trade, she described an Indian woman as "the queen of the forest" and noted, "If you add to the price an old garment, or a blanket, or a string of glass beads, *the treasure* is at once put on and worn with *such* [italics per original] an air of 'look at me.' Broadway could hardly exceed it" (138). She

[10] Brenda Child discusses the gendered division of labor of the Anishinaabe people in her book, *Holding Our World Together*. She notes that "Objibwe society considered gender roles to be mutually supportive, valued the collective practices of women, and respected their legal rights" (46).

once again invoked (and, one could argue, imposed) European-American standards of gentility.

Later in *A New Home*, Kirkland employed a description of an American Indian man as "other" for different effect: to demonstrate that the few Indians who remained in the vicinity of Montacute posed little threat for the genteel women who lived in the area. She and Mrs. Rivers, newly-arrived from the East, encountered the man while he was hunting deer. Kirkland portrayed herself as nonchalant, in contrast to the fearful reaction of her friend. Rather than building suspense, as she did when she depicted the experience her husband had with his scouting party and the drunken Indians, Kirkland instead wrote that she and Mrs. Rivers decided to set out to explore the area and opted to "wend our *resolute* [italics mine] way" as far as Tinkerville. According to her account, she was calm and steadfast. She described a lovely scene while journeying "through woods cool and moist as the grotto of Undine," replete with flowers and berries. The sound of her dog D'Orsay barking disrupted the tranquility, and Kirkland remarked that she thought her dog might have detected a deer, but "It was only an Indian." She proceeded to describe how she attempted to converse with the man, stopping "to inquire whether we were in the right track." Unfortunately, he "could not be made to understand but gave the usual assenting grunt and passed on" (144-5). When Kirkland turned to speak with Mrs. Rivers, she wrote that she was shocked to discover that she was "ashy pale," in danger of "fall[ing] from her horse," and barely able to convey the source of her terror, simply stammering "The Indian." She remarked,

> I was terribly puzzled. It had never occurred to me that the Indians would naturally be objects of terror to a young lady who had scarcely ever seen one and I knew we should probably meet dozens of them in the course of our short ride. (145)

This was a certain exaggeration; moreover, Mrs. Rivers' reaction perhaps should not have surprised Kirkland. She completed her vignette by mentioning she attempted to reassure her travelling companion, who tried (and failed) to muster her courage, but they ultimately had to curtail their outing. Mrs. Rivers, her "timid little friend," remained pale

and incapable of speech for quite some time. Kirkland, one assumes, remained poised and in control.[11] Kirkland portrayed Mrs. Rivers' timidity and extreme reaction as humorous at best, and ludicrous, at worst. This story and its inclusion of an Indian served as a vehicle for Kirkland to underscore that genteel European-American women should mentally prepare themselves for such encounters, however rare, in the rural Great Lakes region. She also portrayed the American Indians as a lesser culture, and therefore unworthy of real concern.

Overall, Kirkland did not appear to have strong feelings about American Indians and the way federal and state governments should deal with them; her opinions on English emigrants were far more apparent. Although she did not comment specifically about the relatively recent removal of many Indians from Michigan, she did consider alcohol a "baleful luxury which performs among their *fated* [italics mine] race the work of fire, famine and pestilence." The term "fated" apparently summed up her view that the American Indian population would continue to decline.[12] Possible concerns she had about the impact of the frontier on the United States were more evident in her depiction of European emigrants. Perhaps since their culture was "civilized," she considered the potential impact they might have on society as greater. American Indians were doomed,

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[11] Walker writes that this incident indicates "the *truly* [italics per original] indigenous people of Michigan are simply another element of the community rather than the occasion for heroic posturing" (102). This is certainly a plausible explanation, but the way Kirkland portrayed this incident also served to emphasize her own experience as a settler in the region, compared to Mrs. Rivers, a newcomer. Perhaps Kirkland accentuated the drama of this encounter (such as the possibility of encountering "dozens" of Indians on a short excursion) to cater to her target audience's expectations about "savage" Indians in the West. In truth, Indians were not much of a threat in the vicinity of Montacute, Michigan. There were not numerous where Kirkland lived, they were poor, and they did not have proficiency in American agricultural methods, so they were incapable of taking jobs away from the whites in the region. Basically, they were systemically excluded from the dominant economy and culture.

[12] Robert Bieder notes in *Science Encounters the Indian* that "The [1839] publication of *Crania Americana* by Samuel Morton, a Philadelphia physician considered the 'father of American physical anthropology,' became a rationale and apology for scientific racism, and the widespread view that Native Americans were biologically predestined to extinction" (79).

in her view, for extinction or assimilation. In contrast, male European immigrants who were eligible to vote had the ability to influence local, state, and national governments and could, therefore, spur changes, positive or negative, in the country's political and socio-economic landscape.[13] Kirkland appeared to consider not only class differences but also how fully wealthy European emigrants supported American national principles of hard work and freedom, tempered by social responsibilities. Certainly, she believed anyone of means among the upper class who immigrated to the United States should support the country's democratic and egalitarian ideals, albeit within the context of genteel behavior.

Eliza Farnham presented a more balanced assessment, compared to Kirkland, of the past, present, and future of American Indians while considering the implications of their fate and what long-term impact, if any, their treatment could have on greater American society. In respect to her opinion that the American Indians were a doomed people, her views in *Life in Prairie Land* were similar to Kirkland's. Overall, however, her direct and indirect encounters with these people lacked the sarcasm or humor of Kirkland's writing. As John Hallwas notes in Eliza Farnham's *Life in Prairie Land*, Farnham had a romanticized view of how Indians lived before contact with Europeans and European-Americans, considering them "an embodiment of her belief that living in close, sensitive contact with unspoiled nature ennobled man's spirit" (317-8). In her only personal interaction with the few remaining Indians still living in Tazewell County that she wrote about in *Life in Prairie Land*, Farnham commented that it was terrible to see how far these people had fallen. "The strength and freedom of the past," she remarked, "[are] in sad contrast with the weakness and humiliation of the present." She reflected on "how different" their lives were now, adding, "I had seen, a few days before, the miserable, degraded remnant of their race that still lingered in these pleasant

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[13] Kirkland discussed voting several times in *A New Home*, and while she expressed concerned that men like Mr. Jenkins were routinely elected in rural Michigan (266-7), she was pleased more refined men like Mr. Hastings were relocating to the region and also running for office (316).

haunts…they were a painful spectacle—a sadder ruin than the crumbling temples and broken idols of Eastern lands" (344).

Farnham's personal views about United States politics were, in some ways, more judgmental than female travel writers of her era usually expressed.[14] She was certainly aware of and apparently agreed with the idea that women exerted authority in the domestic sphere, having previously written in an article in *Brother Jonathan* that women were not political agents and needed no political powers (qtd. in Basch, 143).[15] Perhaps by writing about the opinions of her sister and her brother-in-law regarding American Indians, Farnham was trying to acknowledge other viewpoints that might resonate more fully with her readers.[16] Her inclusion in *Life in Prairie Land* of their impressions of American Indians not only provided additional perspective on her relationship with her family members, but it could also have served as an acknowledgement of the more "typical" view of American Indians that middle or upper class women and men might hold.[17] Essentially, Farnham's sister viewed American Indians as brutal, or "savage,"

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[14] Kirkland acknowledged this convention when she wrote in her sequel to *A New Home*, *Forest Life*, that "Politics and statistics are work for wiser heads, and abler hands, and more extensive information. But views of society have been thought to come legitimately within the female province, and for this purpose the humblest form has been adopted" (2: 232).

[15] While Farnham might have believed women needed no political powers, she indicated she was disturbed by some of the men who held political office in rural Illinois. She met an uncouth man who went by the nickname "Jersey" while traveling by steamboat who she declared was as ignorant as "the most unfavored peasant," remarking, "I have rarely met in a citizen of the republic a like absence of all acquired knowledge except among some of the miserable emigrants from the mountains of North Carolina" (34).

[16] Sara Mills notes in *Discourses of Difference* that women's travel writing, as a genre, has had to negotiate many literary conventions and social discourses that ultimately determine both how the books are produced and how they are received by the public (61). She assesses that women travel writers are "caught between the conflicting demands of the discourse of femininity and that of imperialism" (21).

[17] Susan Roberson discusses the notion of the public and domestic "spheres" belonging to men and women, respectively, in *Antebellum Women Writers and the Road*, noting, "traditionally the road has been claimed as a male construct against the confined space of the female." She argues that women included domestic details on the road to claim this space for commentary (115-6).

and her brother-in-law viewed them as noble—two stereotypes typical of the era. Given Farnham's extended commentary on the importance of practical education for women and what constituted an ideal "social contract" of marriage, she was comparatively silent about what implications, if any, one could take from contemplating the culture of American Indians in contrast to European-American society.

Farnham explained that her sister Mary told her that her imagination ran wild when she and her husband were en route to Tazewell County and encountered their first evidence of American Indians, a footpath she described as "the narrow, deep-worn trail of the dark people who had traversed it so long before us."[18] Although Mary said that she believed "much emotion had dwelt here," including "love, hospitality, [and] friendship," she considered "fierce hatred" the ultimate emotion that "had grown, matured, and been extinguished here." As she imagined "fearful war shouts," "death fires," and "wailings," Mary told her she envisioned "files of warriors stealing silently along, unmindful" of the beauty of the prairies, "intent only upon fierce butchery to which they were marching," and her "blood used to chill under these fearful visions." In contrast, Farnham's brother-in-law had a different mental image of the American Indians. She wrote that "He had more sympathy with the stern and implacable in the Indian character [than his wife did]…and delighted to think of the free warriors roaming, fearless of their foes, fearless of storm or tempest, in search of their enemies."[19] Farnham added that "Later years…quenched much of this feeling in [her brother-in-law], but he still loves those legends the olden time" (237). Unfortunately, she did not specify what experiences he had in "later years" that resulted in a change of opinion, but it is reasonable to conjecture he encountered drunken, "wretched" American Indians as Farnham did, and his

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[18] A reaction similar to that of Kirkland's friend Mrs. Rivers in *A New Home*.

[19] Georgi-Findley quotes Farnham's recollections of her sister's coming across an Indian trail to advance her argument "Tribal people—the invasion of whose habitat [Farnham's sister] denies by configuring it as a new creation—only exist as traces on the land" in *Life in Prairie Land* (41-2). This is only part of Farnham's reflection on American Indians in her book. What Georgi-Findley does not consider is Farnham's brother-in-law's views, nor Farnham's own mention of direct interaction with American Indians.

interactions shattered his idyllic notion of the "noble savage."

Farnham tended to romance the ideal of the "noble savage" by reflecting on the history of American Indians and mourning the way the United States government treated them. As Nick Kryczka notes in "Captive Audiences," for Farnham, "Indians became set pieces for a lamentation on the lost nobility of a land without the disruptive bustle of human industry." While characterizing the Black Hawk War as a futile situation where American Indians faced an overwhelmingly superior enemy, she commented that their effort to fight United States Army troops was akin to "a handful of withered leaves upon a tempest," for the American Indians were greatly outnumbered and doomed to fail (345). She then reflected that the few remaining members of tribes who once inhabited the region were "Drunken, poor, clothed in tatters, begging of those who dwelt in their former home the fire that had consumed their souls—nay, offering to barter their wives and children for it…" (342-347). Farnham conveyed that she viewed American Indians as different from European-Americans, but she was also sympathetic to their suffering and degradation. She tempered the racism that pervaded her era with a consideration, albeit romanticized, of American Indian culture and how contact with European-Americans hastened its decline.

Farnham's last two interactions with American Indians during her years in Illinois were visits to important cultural sites: the ruins of the Sauk Indian's burial ground and council house and Starved Rock. She wrote that her tour of the Sauk ruins was something of an afterthought, for she would soon depart Illinois, and seeing the burial grounds was one of "several little excursions in the neighborhood, which was yet to be performed." It was possible that she continued to grieve over the loss of her sister and her own son and that seeing these locations resonated with her, personally. While she did not directly state that she was reminded of the deaths of her sister and her son, her descriptions of the sites were contemplative, if not mournful. In this respect, Farnham explored the emotions inspired by the places she visited. In her description of the abandoned area, Farnham contrasted the beauty of the setting with the macabre aspect of strolling past partially collapsed graves. After remarking that a stream was visible en

route to the ruins, "smiling through waving tree tops or swelling immediately on the margin of that beautiful section of the…" Illinois River, her tone turned somber. As she walked along a well-used footpath, she used a phrase that echoed her sister's[20] when she noted that "many a swarthy foot had trodden its narrow bed." Farnham came across a handful of graves, and she then spied "a ghastly skull rolled from its dreamless slumber," displaced from a grave damaged by what she supposed was erosion.[21] After briefly describing the council grounds, she provided additional details about the other burials plots she saw, writing,

> More interesting to me were the graves thickly strown along the verge of the bank. Some had fallen in and partially revealed the skeletons sitting upright, their decayed canoes, which had rudely served in place of coffins, crumbling and dissolving about them into the earth whence they had sprung. (343)

Farnham explained that the scene moved here, noting that the site's "rare beauty, in the still autumn day when we visited it, seemed to me to foster the wild melancholy which so deeply tinctured the character of its decayed sovereigns" (344). Her use of the word "melancholy" stands out not only in the context of her applying it universally to American Indians, but also possibly in the context of the comments she made after her sister and her son died, when she wrote that "The deepest chord of my heart was vibrating to the last fierce blow, and no lighter touch could waken its other strings." She also used the same word, "melancholy," to describe how her home felt to her after her dual losses. As such, the comments she made in reflection as she visited the graves could also have served as a kind of elegy for her departed loved ones.

At the end of *Life in Prairie Land*, Farnham described a famous regional incident in American Indian history: Starved Rock. Her discussion was similar to Fuller's, for

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[20] Namely, "…the narrow, deep-worn trail of the dark people who had traversed it so long before us" (237).

[21] The damage could also have been from looting, but Farnham did not specifically mention any grave excavations. In contrast, Steele visited a museum in Cincinnati, Ohio and was disappointed its collection of "Indian relics or organic remains" (240) had been destroyed in a fire.

she drew upon writings and accounts by other individuals to describe the legend of the annihilation of the Illinois Indians by the Potawatomi in 1769, described by Henry Schoolcraft in his book *Travels in the Central Portions of the Mississippi Valley*.[22] Farnham acknowledged the locale was "in these tamer days a curious and interesting object to visitors," and she possibly included mention of it in consideration of what her readers who were particularly interested in Illinois might expect to find in a work about life as a settler in the part of Illinois where she lived.[23] She included a stirring account of the incident, noting that "Legends of mighty deeds, such as make the boast of prouder nations, fierce hatreds, undying loves, such as troubadours delighted to sing of the knights of olden times, float over all these beautiful realms" (397). Here, Farnham equated the core message of this American Indian legend to those of "civilized" peoples' medieval tales. In her description of how the Illinois Indians went to the bluff in an effort to resist a siege by their enemies, only to suffer greatly when the Potawatomi denied them access to water from the river below by cutting their buckets free from the ropes they lowered, she provided details that encouraged the reader to empathize with the Illinois Indians and to revile their enemies. She wrote that the top of bluff was "strown with the bones of brave men, tender women, and helpless children," and she specifically mentioned the anguish of "mothers" and "babes," including the "feeble" who died, their corpses "laid *decently* [italics mine] away on the verge of the rock." Farnham explained that when their suffering became "one of those fearful conditions of human being, which occur but once in the history of ages, and form in the annals of nations the

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[22] Schoolcraft noted that the location was "Strong and almost inaccessible by nature" and added that according to Charlevoix, "this natural battlement has been still further fortified by the Indians." He remarked that "…many years ago [the site] was the scene of a desperate conflict between the Pottowattomies, and one band of the Illinois Indians" (319-20). By the summer of 1840, when Steele traveled on the Illinois River as part of her circuit journey of the Great Lakes region, the site must have been fairly well known.

[23] Steele described how a fellow passenger on her steamboat alerted her when they neared the location, saying, "That's the rock where the Ingins were starved to death." She wrote that she immediately asked him "Is that the *starved rock*?" [italics per original] (142), indicating she was familiar with the site.

proverbial evidences of bravery and fortitude to, which countless ages turn back with pride and exultation," the men unsuccessfully attempted to break their enemies' siege, resulting in the deaths of all, including "their enfeebled women and children." She summed up her impressions of Starved Rock by writing, "To me it was a thrilling and fearful spot" (397-401).

Farnham's admiration for the Illinois in this legend, which depicted them as they were before what she considered the "inevitable" decline of all American Indians, was apparent in her account of their defeat by the Potawatomi. Emotionally, the site might have had more significance to her. Once again, her recounting of this tale could also have been a way for her to process her own grief at the loss of her sister and her son during the years she lived in Illinois. She provided a far more literary narrative than Schoolcraft's historical account, using some of the conventions of sentimental fiction to enhance the tale. Moreover, her description of the "agonies" (399) that the Illinois Indians suffered when their family members died echoed her own remarks when she wrote of her son's death, when she described her "…bitter, …agonizing pangs, that rend the very bonds of life, when a mother stands by the cold clay of her only child!"[24] Possible connections to her personal loss notwithstanding, Farnham's discussions of the Sauk burial ground and Starved Rock ultimately served as framing narratives for her reflection on the heritage of the American Indian and what she assessed as the peoples' inevitable complete displacement from the region.

While pondering the fate of American Indians, Farnham considered the United States government's response to the presence of indigenous peoples on the ever-changing frontier. She wrote that the lands where the Indians lived were destined for "the lawful estate of civilized man," for such "A fair land abounding in all that would contribute to the highest condition of civilized life" clearly did not belong to "uncivilized" peoples. In

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[24] Farnham also described her son's burial, noting, "Again the spot where we had stood so few brief days before was visited. The little coffin which seemed to carry my very heart into the earth with it, was lowered close beside my sister's grave; but the latter had not now power to call forth a single tear. We turned away" (254-5).

her view, the "fate of the Indian" was less a reason to "mourn," than the "the indecent, the fraudulent precipitancy with which it was consummated by our [the United States'] selfishness." Speculating that the Indians would have, perhaps, have voluntarily retreated, she wrote that their story was "…one I have often pondered upon…, with a sympathy that would not be hushed by the voice of reason; though it proclaimed that they had fulfilled their mission, and must pass away."[25] Whether they relocated or stayed, however, she believed they would, most assuredly, have continued to decline in numbers, even had the United States delayed westward expansion. Farnham, therefore, believed that the United States government should have waited for the retreat or decline of the American Indians before sanctioning mass settlement of the West. She further admonished that the government should not be complacent about its "haste," since it "rudely expelled the original owners" of the land. "[I]t was not the office of the savage to dispute his right," she remarked, but "We had room and time enough to have waited more patiently, while Nature was finishing in her own way the plan she had begun" (345). Biding time for the inevitable to occur, in her view, would have been more appropriate than forcing the members of the indigenous population from their lands prematurely.[26]

In contrast to Farnham, who only mentioned European emigrants with passing references to Irish women (149, 308) at the very end of *Life in Prairie Land* when she touched upon the theory of the social stages of civilization and wrote, "The pent up famishing legions of Europe may find room and abundance here when they shall have burst the fetters that bind them there" (400-8), Margaret Fuller discussed emigrants from

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[25] Georgi-Findley considers support of "national destiny," for Farnham "to be stronger than personal sympathy." She further argues that Farnham invoked "nature and reason" in order "to legitimize white westward expansion" (42-3). This assertion has merit, for whatever Farnham's sympathies might have been when she considered how the Illinois Indian mothers must have suffered when their infants died, she relegated the tale of their people to that of a legend from a high point in their past—a bold stand that resulted in defeat.

[26] While discussing the fate of the Indian, Farnham used terms to describe them that gave greater insight into her view of them. She wrote that the Indian had "pride and independence of character…, energy and daring, [a]…veneration for the ashes of his dead [, and a] …keen sense of the great the free and the beautiful in nature" (345).

Europe in more detail in *Summer on the Lakes*, though she devoted far more time in her work to American Indians.[27] Commentary on American society punctuated her descriptions as she compared and contrasted European emigrants with European-Americans. In a humorous incident that occurred early in her journey, Fuller encountered a woman traveler from England who sat up all night rather than sleeping in inn's barroom after it had closed for the evening, in order to maintain propriety. Fuller and her friends stayed in a public house with many other travelers, and the women had to make do by sleeping in the common room of the establishment. Noting that this was the only time she was not able to stay with "private families" while traveling with her friends,[28] Fuller emphasized the comedic aspects of the situation, commenting that she and her party "partook of the miseries so often jocosely portrayed, of bedchambers for twelve, a milk dish for universal handbasin, and expectations that you would use and lend your 'hankercher' for a towel." The Englishwoman stood out because she was so fastidious.[29] Fuller wrote that she was obviously English, because of "the impossibility she experienced of accommodating herself to the indecorums of the scene." Contrasting the woman with "we yankees, born to rove," Fuller noted that the American women slept very well, "as sweetly as we would in the 'bigly bower' of any baroness." Her reference to nobility was clearly a jibe at the foreigner, yet it also highlighted the adaptability and good humor of Fuller and her fellow American women travelers, thereby portraying them (and America) in a positive light. When she called the woman "England," she made a sweeping association between the woman and her nation. Fuller then compared her behavior to that of "her parent country," who "watches the seas, that nobody may do

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[27] Whereas most scholars discuss Fuller's use of "othering" in her depiction of American Indians, Tonkovich identifies "women in the West" as a second group (83). Her discussion of these women excludes European emigrants.

[28] Fuller stayed in the parlor of an inn on Mackinaw Island, later in her journey, when she made a side trip there on her own (170).

[29] In a characterization heavy with sarcasm, Fuller remarked that she thought that the woman "sat up all night, wrapped in her blanket shawl, and with a neat lace cap upon her head; so that she would have looked perfectly the lady, if any one had come in; shuddering and listening" (41).

wrong in any case" (40-1). Her ethnocentric criticism of this traveler contrasted with the comments she made only five pages later in her book, where she decried the type of American settlers who failed to consider anything "beyond satisfying their grossest material wants" (46). Balance was key. Fuller had exacting standards for cleanliness and gentility, but a foreign tourist (or emigrant) who was too concerned, in her estimation, with propriety and keeping up appearances, was also worthy of scorn.

Admittedly, Fuller was not condemnatory of all European emigrants. The key to acceptance of a foreigner for Fuller, evidently, was in his or her temperament and whether or not it was compatible with American cultural values. After her memorable night in the public house, she and her friends later stayed for several days in the home of an "Irish gentleman." Admiring his home and its environs, Fuller remarked that his "absenteeship [from Ireland] seemed of the wisest kind, since for a sum which would have been but a drop of water to the thirsty fever of his native land, he commands a residence which has all that is desirable, in its independence, its beautiful retirement, and means of benefit to others." The location of the man's house, with its striking view of the river, greatly impressed her, as did "the unobtrusive good taste of all the arrangements." She assessed that the owner[30] had an "intelligent appreciation of the spirit of the scene" (44-5). Still later in her journey, after she visited a community made up of people from the East Coast as well as from Europe, she commented on the "pleasant society [that] is formed of the families who live along the banks of this stream [the Rock River] upon farms." She wrote, "They are from various parts of the world, and have much to communicate to one another. Many have cultivated minds and refined manners, all a varied experience, while they have in common the interests of a new country and a new life" (60). This interest in America and their new life there set these European emigrants apart, in Fuller's estimation. The differences between these various people and

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[30] Though an absent host, the Irishman evidently appreciated the beauty of the frontier, not only material gain. Considering the way many travel writers characterized the Irish, Fuller is fully persuaded by the man's financial success to consider him of the same socio-economic status. Anti-Irish sentiment was common in the Northeast.

"England" was their willingness to set aside airs to make an effort to integrate into American society.[31] Moreover, she most likely appreciated their "cultivated minds and refined manners."

"England" notwithstanding, overall, Fuller seemed more inclined than Kirkland to see good traits among European emigrants. Of course, given the limited time she spent in the Upper Midwest during her summer travels, she simply might not have interacted directly or as much as Kirkland did with the types of emigrant settlers she criticized for exhibiting low-class behavior, associating with American Indians, or ruthlessly pursuing profits through land speculation.[32] In one specific instance, Fuller met an upper-class married couple from Europe. This husband and wife struck her as ill-suited for life on the frontier,[33] yet they also impressed her with their determination and resolve. Similar to Kirkland's discussion of the differences between the life of the elite in Europe and in the West, Fuller noted that they "escaped from the heartlessness of courts, to encounter the vulgarity of the mob." The key difference from the English elite whom Kirkland criticized and this couple whom Fuller praised was, apparently, their positive attitude and willingness to attempt to adapt to life in America, despite numerous challenges. She did not note any signs this couple held themselves above their American neighbors, nor that they were disappointed with differences between liberty and freedom they expected to encounter in America and the realities they had experienced. Fuller did remark that it was important for a European emigrant

> to come sufficiently armed with patience to learn the new spells which the new dragons require, (and this can only be done on the spot,) he will not finally be

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[31] Fuller met another woman from England who, she remarked, was the only "contented" woman she met in Wisconsin, for according to this woman, "she had seen so much suffering in her own country that the hardships of this seemed as nothing to her" (116).

[32] Fuller did express concern that "rude foreigners can so little understand the best interests of the land they seek for bread and shelter" (105). Perhaps she felt wealthy, refined emigrants could offer more to the region and to the United States.

[33] Fuller wrote that the husband hurt his foot en route to Michigan. She was sympathetic to the difficulties they encountered and evidently considered his injury sufficient justification for his hiring others to farm his land for him.

> disappointed of the promised treasure; the mob will resolve itself into men, yet crude, but of good dispositions, and capable of good character; the solitude will become sufficiently enlivened and home grow up at last from the rich sod. (121)

This husband and wife, "nurslings of the court and the city," Fuller likened to "heliotropes," "damask roses," and "thorough-bred…Arabian horse[s]." They were clearly out of their element, and she remarked that "Refined graces, cultivated powers, shine in vain before field laborers, as laborers are in this present world." Although she reflected, "For a man a position is desirable in some degree proportioned to his education," she also expressed optimism the "affectionate courage" she discerned in this European emigrant couple would see them through the challenges of adjusting to life on the frontier. Should this couple succeed in their endeavors, she envisioned they could "become true lords of the soil, and informing geniuses to those around." They might then come to believe their sacrifices were worth "the tormented independence of the new settler's life" (121-4). In other words, foreign emigrants with the right attitude who came from the upper class were, in Fuller's estimation, capable of exerting a considerable, positive influence on less refined individuals residing on the frontier.

While Fuller criticized "England," a member of the socio-economic elite, as a foreigner who clung too much to propriety, she also singled out lower-class European emigrants as topics of discussion. Overall, she only observed them from a distance, remarking on the scenic tableau they make when viewed from afar. For example, when she saw emigrant farmers from Germany, Holland, and Ireland, she remarked that Indianans were similar in appearance to these members of the "foreign peasantry." Commenting on the pleasing visual effect of the scene, she wrote, "The most picturesque *objects* [italics mine] to be seen from Chicago on the inland side were the lines of Hoosier wagons." She characterized these people as the "rude farmers" who were "the large first product of the soil." Further objectifying them, Fuller added, "In the country it is very *pretty* [italics mine] to see them prepared to 'camp out' at night, their horses taken out of harness, and they lounging under the trees, enjoying the evening meal." She completed her depiction of the influx of immigrants arriving in the region by describing

the "great boats [that] come panting in from their rapid and marvellous journey" across Lake Michigan and noting that she sometimes "hear[d] the French rippling and fluttering familiarly amid the rude ups and downs of the Hoosier dialect" (80). Apparently, she found their presence on the frontier pleasing, when viewed or heard from a distance. Given Fuller's willingness to visit American Indians in their encampments, it is unlikely that mere reticence stopped her from making a similar visit to the wagon trains. She simply might not have been interested, or she might not have been as willing to overlook genteel standards for behavior and typical standards for household cleanliness to go over to the wagon trains to meet these poor, "rude" folk. Regardless, by only describing lower-class emigrants from Europe from a distance, she grouped them together, rather than delineating any individual details. At one point in *Summer on the Lakes*, Fuller compared an upper class European emigrant family to lower-class American settlers, and she likened her lower-class countrymen and lower-class European emigrants to "ox[en]," "ruder [vegetation] growth," and "plough horse[s]" (124). She further noted that "Refined graces, cultivated powers, shine in vain before field laborers, as laborers are in this present world" (122).

The majority of Fuller's use of "othering" in *Summer on the Lakes* pertained to American Indians. Her personal approach to interacting with them neared that of an ethnographic study.[34] Fuller read about American Indians before undertaking her journey, and she conducted additional research after she returned home.[35] Her findings, which included lengthy excerpts from various works and what some scholars identify as different narrative voices, were far more complex than observations and reflections of Kirkland, Farnham, or Steele. Fuller was also occasionally contradictory in her assessments. At the start of her journey, she mentioned she imagined the mound

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[34] Jeffrey Steele asserts in *Transfiguring America* that Fuller "adopts the critical stance of the book reviewer who surveys early literary portraits of Native American culture," adding that she "stifle[s] the play of sympathy and mourning" in her depictions of American Indians "in her struggle to find an objective viewpoint" (139).

[35] For a discussion of Fuller's research, see Nicole Tonkovich's article, "Traveling in the West, Writing in the Library."

builders, predecessors to the American Indians, were full of "noble happiness" and they lived in a setting that "suggested to me a Greek splendor, a Greek sweetness" (53). That said, her impressions of the Indians she met in the region were far from idealized. While several scholars have noted there is danger in assuming her remarks about American Indians were all her own personal views (much the same as in her discussion of marriage and family), Fuller's sense of excitement when she first saw American Indians, discernable because of "their blanketed forms," seems authentically her own. She declared that this was the moment when she had "the first feeling that I really approached the West" (18). Furthermore, whenever opportunities arose during her summer circuit of the Great Lakes region, Fuller drew near to the Indians and conversed with them,[36] at first asking questions about the medicinal properties of local flowers (33, 65) and later observing them in their lodgings.

Fuller described visits to two separate American Indian encampments during her travels. Similar to how Farnham's comments on the Sauk burial ground and Starved Rock could have been related to her emotional state following the death of her sister and her son, Fuller's descriptions of Indian women often resonated with her views on the role of women in European-American society. Fuller and her friends visited an American Indian encampment near Silver Lake, Illinois, entering a family's dwelling, without their invitation, after a thunderstorm overtook them. This incident was similar to Steele's act of trespassing into a family's cabin in order to satisfy her "Yankee curiosity" to see country living up close (Steele 233). Fuller noticed the Indians exhibited "gentle courtesy," despite their "extreme poverty," and stated that one of their men had a "theatrical" appearance.[37] She later found out the Indians were in the area in an effort to

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[36] This incident and others stood in contrast to her merely commenting on European emigrants wagon trains and not visiting them by their campfires.

[37] Fuller noted that the Potawatomi "seemed to think we would not like to touch them" and that "a sick girl in the lodge where I was, persisted in moving so as to give me the dry place; a woman with the sweet melancholy eye of the race, kept off the children and wet dogs from even the hem of my garment" (119). She did not write anything to indicate if she felt their behavior toward her was a result of their subjugated status.

barter personal items, such as beaded headbands that she likened to "Grecian knot[s]," for food. Summing up her experience with the Indians as "a picturesque scene for memory," Fuller added that she saw other members of this band in Milwaukee, and they were "wild and grotesque" in their "paint and feather head-dresses" and "French-Roman" in their appearance (119-21).

Unlike Steele, Fuller did not portray this intrusion as a matter of little import. She freely acknowledged that "we crowded the occupants much, among whom were several sick, on the damp ground, or with only a ragged mat between them and it," and that her visit "inconvenienced" the Potawatomi with "most impertinent curiosity." Given her awareness she had imposed upon the Indians' hospitality, it is striking she made no mention of helping to alleviate their suffering in any way. Evidently, while she wanted to learn more about Indians, her concern did not necessarily extend to providing material assistance. Susan Roberson argues in *Antebellum American Women Writers and the Road* that "This episode reflects Fuller's dual movement to the margins to engage in cultural critique and resistance to accepted discourses on the Indian, and to the center as she situates herself physically within the lodge as an 'imperial eye' that views and interprets the 'picturesque' scene before her" (*Antebellum* 59). In contrast, Jeffrey Steele asserts that Fuller advocated for "maternal love" in *Summer on the Lakes* as "a shared cultural paradigm that can mobilize social reform." He claims that "Fuller challenges the prejudices of her age by appealing to a universal standard of humanity transcending specific details of racial difference" (146-7). While Steele's assessment has some merit, Roberson's more accurately reflects the numerous contradictions found in Fuller's accounts of American Indians. Were Fuller appealing to universal standards of humanity, her interactions with American Indians, particularly women, would probably have included tangible examples of assistance and support.[38] Instead, similar to her evocation

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[38] Fuller could have been disinterested in providing substantial aid because she was simply traveling through the region, but Kirkland and Farnham, as settlers, displayed similar attitudes toward Indians, not detailing any instances when they provided aid or contributed to charitable efforts to assist them. Fuller's attitude could, therefore, be more indicative of her world view than her status as a tourist.

of gentility when dealing with lower-class Americans, Fuller imposed limits to her interactions with American Indians, as seen in her visiting women at the encampments near on or Mackinaw Island.[39]

Fuller later subjected herself to the scorn of members of her own middle-class group (albeit of a temporary duration), so great was her desire to learn more about the region's indigenous peoples. Since she especially wished to learn more about American Indian women, she made arrangements to stay in the vicinity of Mackinaw Island for a few days when she returned there en route back to New England. Noting a group of Indians who were setting up camp along the shore of Lake Huron, she at first observed them from afar. In phrasing echoing the words she used when describing the emigrant wagon trains, she wrote that the scene was lovely and "picturesque," with a certain "gipsy charm" to it. Whereas she only viewed the lower-class European emigrants from a distance, in this instance, however, she eventually walked out to the Indians' encampment site by herself and sat among them, using "signs" and "pantomime" to overcome language barriers (174-5, 181). Given her status as a genteel European-American woman, her behavior was singular. She wrote that the other women in her hotel, her social peers, were dismayed by her interactions with the Indians. "How I could endure the dirt, the peculiar smell of the Indians, and their dwellings, was a great marvel in the eyes of my lady acquaintance," she remarked, "[I]ndeed, I wonder why they did not quite give me up, as they certainly looked on me with great distaste for it" (183). Given Fuller was unlikely to encounter these women again, she did not allow them to dissuade her from conducting her field work.

As Fuller's two visits to Indian encampments illustrated, she was especially interested in American Indian women. While most of her general research on American Indians did not focus specifically on the peoples she encountered at Mackinaw Island, she

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[39] Fuller, apparently, did not consider American Indian women acceptable recipients of social courtesies. At another point in her journey, she met an American Indian woman who was the widow of a French Canadian trader. This woman, whom Fuller described as "ladylike," puzzled her. Between the woman's westernized behavior and her ability to speak French, Fuller treated her as someone closer to her equal (250).

cited writings by Anna Grant and Jane Schoolcraft that directly addressed Ojibwe women. Fuller discussed her impression of each woman's research, noting that Schoolcraft emphasized the conjugal and parental love evident in Indian families, whereas Grant emphasized the lifetime of "drudgery" that is an Indian woman's lot. Although she agreed with Schoolcraft's assessment that American Indian women "have great power at home," she noted that "This power is good for nothing, unless the wom[e]n [are] wise to use it aright" (182). Fuller concluded that "The observations of women upon the position of woman are always more valuable than those of men; but, of these two, Mrs. Grant's seems much nearer the truth than Mrs. Schoolcraft's, because, though her opportunities for observation did not bring her so close, she looked more at both sides to find the truth" (178). Fuller dismissed Schoolcraft's views though she was of mixed heritage. Her mother was Ojibwe and from a politically distinguished family.

The challenge in making a determination of how Fuller's views on American Indian women might have related to her opinions on the role of European-American women in United States society is that she was contradictory in her assessments. As Roberson notes, Fuller's "Indian sections are some of the most perplexed parts of the narrative, for that the same time that she articulates a feminist politics of resistance to hegemonic practices and discourses, she participates to some degree in them" (*Antebellum* 57). Her interactions with American Indians did, however, influence Fuller when she wrote *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, the book she published after *Summer on the Lakes*. In it, she referred back to some of the works she read in preparation for her circuit of the Great Lakes regions, noting that "Mrs. Grant expresses a wish that Reformers would take a hint from observation…of how little consequence the Indian women are in youth, and how much in age, because in that trying life, good counsel and sagacity are more prized than charms" (184). Given she mentioned in *Summer on the Lakes* that she did not find Mrs. Schoolcraft's works as convincing as Mrs. Grant's, it is not surprising she did not mention the former's work in *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*.

Ultimately, Fuller decided that American Indian women occupied a lower place

within their culture than European-American women did in theirs (179). Commenting about American Indian woman, she noted, "Perhaps they suffer less than their white sisters, with little power of self-sustenance. But their place is certainly lower, and their share of the human inheritance less" (179). Remarking that, in her view, white men felt "hatred" and white women felt "disgust" or "loathing" for American Indians, she contrasted these views with the opinions she formed during her personal interactions. Fuller might not have hated nor loathed these women, and she might not have found them disgusting, but she did write that they "are almost invariably coarse and ugly, with the exception of their eyes, with a peculiarly awkward gait, and forms bent by burthens." She also assessed that they occupied an "inferior position" in their society, though "More weariness than anguish, no doubt, falls to the lot of most of these women" (174, 179). While she noted that the Indian women she met on the Lake Huron shoreline exhibited a "striking" air of "decorum and delicacy," they examined anything she offered them "from [her] hand" quite carefully, and they "shut or fold[ed]…and return[ed]…[these items] with an air of lady like precision" (180), her view that these mannerisms did not make them ladies was apparent. Fuller's approach and opinion[40] of them differed from Kirkland's and Farnham's, but she still considered these peoples as subordinate to European-Americans.

Like Kirkland and Farnham, Fuller believed the fate of American Indians was displacement and, possibly, extinction. She wrote that they were like the forests, and they "cannot linger behind [their] proper era" (193) and later remarked, "I have not

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[40] Steele interprets Fuller's assessment of the "delicacy" and "precision" of the American Indian women as an indication that she "establishes a common humanity that has the potential to erase race and class divisions" (158), but the consensus of most scholarly writing about Fuller's characterization is far less favorable. For example, Roberson assesses that the American Indian women Fuller encountered by Mackinaw were "marginalized, unspoken, unheard" (*Antebellum* 54), and Walker argues that Fuller viewed the Indians with reproach, for they were "despoilers of nature" (Ibid. 56). Burbick considers Fuller's depiction of the oppression of American Indian women "an indication not that all women are alike, but that in their oppressed position they ironically mark an additional hierarchy of values," and European-American women are clearly superior (76).

wished to write sentimentally about the Indians, however moved by the thought of their wrongs and speedy extinction" (234). Drawing upon numerous sources written about various American Indian tribes, she formulated an assessment of the negative impact of the United States government and Protestant missionaries on the country's indigenous population.[41] Ultimately, she adopted what Roberson called "a fluid, paradoxical position" when she determined that efforts to "civilize," as well as attempts to convert Indians to Christianity, were futile (*Antebellum* 193-4) and that racial "amalgamation"[42] or award of full citizenship would prove fruitless.[43] That said, she wrote, "Our people and our government have sinned alike against the first-born of the soil, and if they are the fated agents of a new era, they have done nothing—have invoked no god to keep them sinless while they do the hest of fate" (184).[44] In her critique of the nation's American Indian policy, Fuller was far more pointed than Farnham, clearly intending a strong message to her readership. She recommended efforts to preserve American Indian cultural heritage sites. In addition to including lengthy excerpts of works about American

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[41] Fuller quoted long passages of several authors' works pertaining to American Indians, first discussing peoples from various tribes and then focusing on those who live in Michigan. In addition to Grant and Schoolcraft, she cited Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Thomas McKenney, Count Nikolaus Ludwig Zinzendorf, George Catlin, Governor Edward Everett of Massachusetts, James Adair, and Jonathan Carver, among others. Tonkovich likens Fuller's extensive use of quoted materials to an effort to create "a library in miniature" in *Summer on the Lakes*.

[42] Intermarriages between American Indians and European-Americans "would afford the only true and profound means of civilization," in her view, "But nature seems," she added, "like all else, to declare, that this race is fated to perish" for "Those of mixed blood fade early, and are not generally a fine race" (195).

[43] Fuller also believed awarding full citizenship to American Indians would amount to a futile premise, unless whites were to accept Indians in their hearts as brothers (195). She gave a personal example of a European-American woman who was raising an American Indian orphan. The woman hated "The Savage" (183). Fuller identified the woman's negative attitude toward American Indians as the problem. The woman expected her foster child to be ungrateful; her treatment of the child and her negative attitude toward his or her kin would produce this result.

[44] As Joseph Steele notes, Fuller further emphasized that God's punishment might await those who have mistreated the American Indians when she quoted Chapter 18 from the Book of Matthew (160-1).

Indians, she wrote that "ere they depart, I wish there might be some masterly attempt to reproduce, in art or literature, what is proper to them, a kind of beauty and grandeur, which few of the every-day crowd have hearts to feel, yet which ought to leave in the world its monuments, to inspire the thought of genius through all ages" (196). In her view, efforts to document culture and to preserve what one can in museums were of the essence.[45] She also admonished her readers, "…let every man and every woman, in their private dealings with the subjugated race, avoid all share in embittering, by insult or feeling prejudice, the captivity of Israel" (236).

Eliza Steele's *Summer Journey in the West* differed from Kirkland's, Farnham's, and Fuller's works in some significant ways. Whereas Fuller sought out American Indians and made interacting with them a major goal for her circuit journey of the Great Lakes, Steele had other intentions for her journey, to include distributing religious tracts at the various places she visited. Nonetheless, in some ways she included more detailed descriptions of the Indians that she saw or met than Kirkland or Fuller did, a surprising difference between the women's books, given Steele spent weeks in the Great Lakes region, rather than years, and Fuller had a specific goal to meet Indians. Moreover, Steele depicted American Indian women as "princesses" as well as "drudges," whereas Kirkland, Farnham, and Fuller viewed them only as the latter.[46] This difference could again have to do with Steele's status as a prominent member of the upper class. She was, perhaps, more likely to view physically beautiful American Indian women as members of their culture's elite, given her own personal wealth and social position.[47]

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[45] Tonkovich writes that "even at its inception, the museum becomes a cemetery, a testament to the cultural domination and reinscription enabled by technologies of writing, taxonomy, and image making" (88).

[46] Pocahontas was the prototypical Indian Princess, as Helen Rountree notes in "Pocahontas: The Hostage Who Became Famous." According to Debra Merskin in "The S-Word,'" "No other Native American stereotype has been framed as consistently and tenaciously as that of the Indian princess… and the squaw. …The two most common stereotypes of Indian women are the Indian princess, who conveys natural, wholesome, virginity, and freshness, and the Squaw/drudge, her opposite" (352-3).

[47] Steele's description of Mrs. Schoolcraft further supported some of the difficulties she had reconciling the woman's status as half European-American, half American Indian.

Steele, like Farnham, also discussed the legend of Starved Rock. She wrote that she and her fellow steamboat passengers "looked with much interest upon the scene that Indian tragedy" as places full of "images of anguish, sorrow, rage and despair." In her summary of the fate of the unhappy band of Illini, who dwelt in the fair land which has taken their name…," however, Steele depicted a different type of ending to the story. Unlike Farnham's account, in which the band's men fought the Potawatomi to the death, Steele wrote that the Illinois Indians "scorned to surrender, but one by one lay down in dignified composure, and, like Caesar, drawing their mantles over them, died in silence" (142-3). The account she summarized was another popular variation of the legend.[48] There is no indication Steele knew of Farnham's version, but perhaps if she did, she portrayed the Illinois as stoically resisting to the end rather than ambushing the Potawatomi because this variation of the legend better aligned with her view of American Indians as a doomed race. Although Steele declared, "you know I have always taken the greatest interest in the fates of our Indian tribes" (109), she added that she saw Indians sharing a commonality with the mammoth: they were destined to disappear from the earth (138).

Early in her journey, Steele demonstrated her tendency to view certain American Indian women as "princesses" when wrote about an incident in which a woman stopped her train by walking on the tracks and refusing to move when the train approached. The language Steele used not only conveyed that she admired the woman's spirit and resolve, but her use of specific phrasing also established the woman as an champion, of sorts, of her people. She wrote, "we soon left all cultivation behind[49] and found ourselves in a deep forest. While gliding rapidly along, the engineer's bell rang to scare some cow or

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She wrote that she had the appearance of "a Spanish lady" (109). Her discomfort was similar to Fuller's when she met the American Indian widow of the French Canadian trader who was fashionable and spoke French.

[48] Mark Walczynski discusses the origins of the legend and its variations in depth in "The Starved Rock Massacre of 1769: Fact or Fiction."

[49] Steele's mention that the train had left cultivation behind indicated her perspective that the train had left the bounds of civilization.

other animal, as we thought, from the rail track." Eventually, Steele and her fellow passengers saw that the obstruction on the track "was an Indian female…enveloped in a dark mantle from beneath which could be seen her scarlet leggins richly embroidered with beads." Steele noted that the woman ignored "the engineer's bell and shrill whistle," continued walking "With a slow and stately step," paying no heed another Indian woman who [wa]s walking alongside the track, urging her to step out of the path of the train by "stretch[ing] forth her hand as if in earnest appeal." Her phrasing showed that she made numerous assumptions about the woman on the track's social standing and motives. She called her "the haughty young princess" and stated that she "scorned to fly before her country's foe." Using specific wording to convey the woman's elevated status, she noted that only when the train stopped did the woman "*condescend* [italics mine]…to walk off the rail way." Steele concluded her tale of encountering this member of what she might term Indian royalty by remarking that the woman "was young and pretty, and her dark eye flashed with a triumphant expression which said, 'You dared not drive over me! I scorned to be forced from the road by your bell, like an animal!'" (53-4). Applying her own cultural standards, Steele surmised that the woman held herself separate and distinct from her peers and refused to let the train, an emblem of civilization, force her out of the way before she had caused the train to a come to a standstill. Overall, Steele's dramatic depiction of this incident is easily one of the more striking vignettes among these four authors' works.

Later in her book, Steele wrote that she was "struck with the difference between this proud race [American Indians] and our own" (62). In describing what distinguished American Indians from European-Americans, her view of them as "other" became even more apparent. Steele was clearly accustomed to merchants catering to her and was nonplussed when she encountered a different culture's way of selling goods. While staying in Niagara, New York she interacted with some of the Tuscarora Indians who lived in a nearby village. Formerly from North Carolina, the members of this band were loyalists during the Revolutionary War who displaced to Ontario, Canada (62). Upon learning that the Indians disliked visits to their village by European-Americans, Steele

and her husband decided not to trespass.[50] Instead, they bought items from the members of the band who had come to their hotel to sell goods. Steele noted that in contrast to a vivacious European-American "peddler or travelling shopman [who] comes in, unpacks his wares, holds up every article, insists upon its worth and beauty, and urges you to buy,"[51] the Indians she encountered were quite reserved when selling their handicrafts. Their downcast eyes, the "expression of profound melancholy that sits upon every countenance," and the "silent, grave, and motionless" manner in which "they sit like the band of conscript fathers awaiting the approach of Attila," were all noteworthy, in her estimation. Adding that they were almost indistinguishable from one another, to her eyes, she noted how "one was struck by the sight of a row of dark beings sitting upright upon the settees in the halls [of her hotel] enveloped in cloaks of scarlet or black, richly embroidered with beads or adorned by pieces of tin cut in flowers and tacked on" (62-3). Her characterization of the Tuscarora does not capture whether they were male or female, let alone their individual personalities. The one exception was her description of an Indian woman who allowed her a glimpse of her infant child.

According to Steele, she attempted to speak with an Indian woman on more than one occasion, but she was unsuccessful. Her efforts were certainly minimal, compared to Fuller's, and she did not convey to her readers what her conversational goals were. Regardless, her exasperation came through when she wrote, "…although I made many efforts [to speak with them] while at Niagara, and they can both speak and understand English," the only words the women spoke to her were the prices of their handicrafts. She reflected, "I never saw but one of them smile. I asked her what she had for sale in her lap—she threw [her cloak] open, and behold a pretty Indian cupid asleep in a birch cradle, swathed and bandaged in their peculiar fashion. Titania would have quarrelled for it." Steele described the woman's facial expression as "a moonbeam smile [that] flashed over her face," and she added that her face immediately became as "dark and gloomy as

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[50] This is a courtesy they did not show the family from New York whose home they entered without permission later in their journey (233).

[51] Steele provided a stereotype of the Yankee salesman.

before" (63-4). Of note, she did not contradict that the woman's child was not, in fact, for sale. Instead, she evoked Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and aligned herself in the role of the fairy queen. Her message was clear: she was superior to the Indian women, and they were to blame for not being willing to converse with her, even after she admired one woman's child.[52]

Steele applied the Marquis of Condorcet's then-prevailing theory of the social stages of civilization when considering the country's indigenous peoples.[53] She referred to this theory far more specifically than Farnham when she wrote, "As in a panorama we behold the wigwam of the savage pass away to give place to a log hut; that disappears and a goodly farm appears; then settlement, a village, a town in succession, until last, an imposing city filled with institutions for arts and sciences; with temples, academies, and all appliances of society in its state of culture and maturity." Steele did not see social stages as merely a progression from primitive to civilized, however. Unlike Farnham, who considered the fate of the Indians the plan of Nature (Farnham, 345), she believed it was God's will for the American Indians to become extinct, in part because they "misused their gift" of the natural abundance of the land and did not develop it (138). This view was clear when she remarked that "a guiding hand is as visible, as upon the walls of Beltshazzer's palace.[54] To the poor Indian the hand writing again appears: 'thou art weighed in the balance and found wanting!'" Steele was not complacent, however, that progress would continue. She added her own warning: "Beware ye, who have inherited his land, that the sentence be not written up against you also!" (139). This last

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[52] Steele commented, "The Indians have always been noted for their strong attachment to their children, and a stranger among them has only to praise the papoose to win his way to the parent's heart" (64).

[53] Henry Nash Smith summed up this theory in his book *Virgin Land*, noting, "The most influential aspect of…[the] theory of civilization was the notion that all human societies pass through the same series of social stages in the course of their evolution upward from barbarism toward the goal of universal enlightenment" (218).

[54] Steele did not specifically address amalgamation, as Fuller did. She did note when visiting the Monticello Female Seminary in Alton, Illinois that there were two Cherokee Indian girls receiving schooling there who will ultimately return home "to be teachers among their people" (180).

statement of hers was most telling. Steele saw the American Indian as heading toward the same fate as the Mastodon (138),[55] because of a failure to make the most of God's gift of the prairies; however, she believed that Americans could suffer a similar fate if they did not live up to what she saw as God's expectations for the people who now occupied this region.[56]

Given Steele's religious devotion, it was unsurprising she discussed the challenges of evangelizing American Indians. She believed that successful conversion was "recompense," in her view, for the "bright land…taken from the bereaved Indian" (96), but she was not optimistic these efforts could succeed. Referring to the efforts of a missionary who lived among the Tuscarora Indians near Niagara, Steele noted that this band of Indians served as an example that "The Indian nations have never lost the remembrance of their former power, and their present degradation. They look upon us as usurpers, who have wrested from them the land of their fathers, and have never forgiven us." She wrote that Indians "count themselves our prisoners, and are indignant that we should come and gaze upon them in their fallen state as objects of curiosity" (62). Evidently, the poor success rate of the missionary to the Tuscarora Indians reaffirmed her assessment. Steele estimated that he converted slightly more than 15 percent of the 300 Indians who resided in the village—numbers similar to those of the missionaries evangelizing lower-class European-American canal workers achieved. She soon shifted her discussion to a reflection on the challenges missionaries to the Indians must have faced in their ministries, rather than the difficult lives of the people they served.

Whereas Fuller actively sought out these "real" Indians, Steele remained a detached observer on the steamboat who was far more interested in what the missionary's

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[55] Similar to Fuller's idea of a national museum for the American Indian, in *Summer Journey in the West*, Steele recommended that the city of St. Louis, Missouri make a public garden of the area's Indian mounds, noting, "As our country becomes settled these interesting reliques will be destroyed if care be not taken to prevent it" (196-7).

[56] "…Steele invokes a scenario of natural history and law that deflects the responsibility for tribal decline away from white Americans" (44), according to Georgi-Findley; however, she did not consider what Steele identified as the responsibility of these "white Americans" to excel where the American Indians, in her estimation, failed.

life must be like. At first, when Steele's steamboat passed by a settlement of "Chippeway Indians who resided upon Warpole under the care of a Missionary of the Methodist church" she was "delighted to behold a veritable Indian lodge, and to see *real* Indians, instead of those half civilized beings I had seen at Niagara."[57] Thinking of the missionary to these people, she wrote, "I had often read of these denying disciples of Jesus, but never before looked the scene of their labors. Here in this lonely shore, away from all they love—their friends and home—and almost shut out from the face of civilized man, they spend their days in laboring to ameliorate lot of these unhappy children of the forest." She reflected on the challenges of living "with no associates save those wretched savages" and expressed sympathy that the only "short glimpse" the missionary had of "his fellow man" was when he saw steamboats passing by in the summer.[58] Steele concluded the missionary's efforts were "Noble," and that "they are indeed conferring a blessing upon them [the Indians] past all return" (95-7).

In contrast to Kirkland and Fuller, Steele, like Farnham, made little mention of European emigrants, simply noting that "the emigrants from the German and Swiss nations are invaluable to us and ought to be warmly received, for in industry, economy and patience, they set a very excellent example to our extravagant people" (82-3). She later wondered if a society should be formed to transport poor European emigrants on the east coast westward across the Alleghenies (263). Perhaps since her husband was English, she did not wish to touch on the topic of middle- or upper-class European emigrants, lest she offend him and his relatives.[59] When confronted with someone who

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[57] Though their attire was similar to the Tuscarora, Steele described how the Chippeway, who were "*real* Indians," had mantles "trimmed with gay colors" and leggings or moccasins that "glittered as they walked." She described the way they walk as "graceful" and "dignified" (96).

[58] American Indians did not qualify as "fellow" to the missionary, evidently.

[59] Where Steele differed from her fellow authors is her commentary about African Americans. She appeared to approve of slavery, tacitly, but she refused to break conventions as a Christian woman who was a member of the upper class. Coming across a slave auction, she wrote, "You must not expect a dissertation upon slavery, for whatever my opinions are I shall keep them to myself, as I cannot mend or alter the state of things by my advise, nor is it a woman's province to meddle in such high matters of

was remarkably different, she usually invoked humor and portrayed herself as superior, falling back on her religious beliefs to note that God would decide people's fates based on their actions, so who was she to judge.

Kirkland, Farnham, Fuller, and Steele differed in some of their specific observations about and conclusions about European emigrants and American Indians in the Great Lakes region, but overall, their years of residence in the Michigan and Illinois or their short journeys through the area forced them to confront aspects of the rural culture that they found challenging or troubling. They were concerned about how well women could maintain domestic ideals in such primitive conditions, where there was greater freedom, fewer models of ideal behavior, limited educational opportunities and an influx of lower-class Americans and European-Americans inundating the region. Although they varied in how much time the devoted to discussions of European emigrants and American Indians, their works show that they would have concurred that the influx of emigrants and the realities of life on the frontier had already resulted in the formation of a far less genteel society than back in the Northeast. All four writers moved beyond the traditional travel literature goals of informing and entertaining the reader to advance the overarching argument that the West needed more women like them either to settle or to travel there to help to improve those aspects of life most in need of genteel influence and to ensure it aligned with ideals for national identity and culture.

State" adding that she adhered to her biblical role as a woman, namely "a keeper of the home" (188).

Chapter Five: Conclusion

As Brigitte Georgi-Findlay's notes in *The Frontiers of Women's Writing*, "…the West" was "…a contested space in which people of different classes, genders, and cultures…met, interacted, and often clashed within highly asymmetrical relations of power and authority" (x). For Caroline Kirkland, Eliza Farnham, Margaret Fuller, and Eliza Steele, the Great Lakes region was a space where rusticity and gentility were in contestation—a frontier of refinement. In their respective works, they showed how they negotiated the challenges of settling or traveling to the Great Lakes region while simultaneously encouraging other genteel women to follow their examples.

The four authors considered the frontier a place where women could bring about considerable, positive change, starting at home in the domestic sphere, resonating with higher levels of society, and ultimately influencing national character for the greater good. According to Henry Nash Smith, "the New England theocratic tradition…[held] that…all emigrants were actually or potentially criminal because of their flight from an orderly municipal life into frontier areas that were remote from centers of control" (216). The authors not only showed that this perception was inaccurate but also that women like them could thrive there. They strived to demonstrate that many popularly held views about the frontier were not necessarily true and that the West had great potential. Through their settler and traveler narratives, the four authors also asserted that their opinions mattered, despite the fact that their areas of focus differed from those of men, who predominantly considered the West in terms of opportunities to accrue wealth.[1]

By evoking standards of refinement in their works, the four writers established a common basis of reference for the members of their target audience, namely, comparatively well to do, educated, white women from the Northeast. Aligning themselves with their intended readers enabled them to establish narrative authority as

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[1] Nina Baym reflects on this difference in perspective in her work *Women's Fiction*, noting, "Domesticity is set forth as a value scheme for ordering all of life, in competition with the ethos of money and exploitation that is perceived to prevail in American society" (27)

they critiqued the culture of the Great Lakes region and its society and suggested ways to improve life in the area. Whether as settlers or travelers, they considered the Great Lakes region in terms of its communities, each undergoing social and cultural refinement.[2] They freely acknowledged that the West was different from the Northeast and that they found the conditions difficult, on occasion, and some of the individuals uncouth. That said, there were young women in the region eager for the guidance of women like them.[3] Moreover, each believed that with time, resources, and proper influences, towns and cities comparable to those back in the Northeast would emerge. For example, as Steele remarked, "Colleges are being erected, churches are building, and every thing for comfort and refinement of life is here in progress," advising her readers, "…if you have a mind to emigrate come to Illinois" (223).

The four authors wrote about the kinds of topics that were considered appropriate for women and were often found in works of sentimental fiction, such as marriage and family dynamics, as well as illness and death, in order to advocate for advancements for women or to stress the importance of traditional, conservative, religious-based values. Each of them considered what types of education and training women and their daughters should receive to prepare them for live in the West. Similar to the ways domestic novelists considered larger social concerns in their works, they used the platform of the domestic sphere in their travel writing to advance arguments about those aspects of Western and American society they considered most critical. As Tompkins notes, "…the popular domestic novel of the nineteenth century represents a monumental effort to reorganize culture from the woman's point of view…. [I]n certain cases, it offers a critique of America." She adds that the sentimental novel should be seen "as a political enterprise, halfway between sermon and social theory, that both codifies and attempts to

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[2] Jane Robinson sums up the different perspectives of men and women in *Wayward Women* by asserting that "men's travel writing is concerned with What and Where and women's is concerned with How and Why" (xiv).

[3] Earlier, in describing her encounter with the "young girl" on the steamboat *Home*, Steele gave an example of such a rustic woman on the frontier eager who was to learn more refined ways (157).

mold the values of its time" (124-6). Tompkins' assessment also pertains to the settler and traveler narratives of Kirkland, Farnham, Fuller, and Steele, for each author considered larger cultural issues from a woman's point of view, encouraging others to join them in refining the West.

Through their consideration of the possible impact large numbers of European emigrants could have on the region, these writers reflected on the future for the region and the country. Fuller saw that settling the West could result in a fundamental change in national character, commenting that "American men and women are inexcusable if they do not bring up children so as to be fit for vicissitudes; that is the meaning of our star, that here all men being free and equal, all should be fitted for freedom and an independence by his own resources wherever the changeful wave of our mighty stream may take him" (124). Kirkland specifically feared the possible negative influence foreigners could have, demonstrating that upper class families needed to relocate to the Great Lakes region to minimize this possibility. And Farnham and Steele thought it preferable for lower-class European emigrants to settle in the West, rather than back in the Northeast, since land was readily available for them there. They might also have believed that region was far enough away from the fully developed parts of the country that geographic separation would minimize whatever counter-effect these individuals could have on refined society and culture.

As the authors' discussions of the American Indians they encountered in the Great Lakes region made clear, they agreed with the concept of the social stages of civilization. All of them espoused the commonly-held view of their era that the American Indians were doomed for continued displacement and eventual assimilation or extinction. Farnham, Fuller, and Steele directly addressed the way the federal government had treated the country's indigenous population and what the nation's actions might indicate about its moral character. Although Fuller and Steele each had the specific goal to interact with Indians whenever possible, Fuller prepared for this aspect of her journey much more exactingly, including extensive reading, and she conducted a type of ethnographic study of the American Indian women she briefly encountered in Michigan.

Whereas Fuller consciously broke with conventions for refined, genteel behavior by visiting American Indian women in their campsites, for the sake of her research, Steele contented herself with the few direct interactions opportunities presented to her, such as when she purchased handicrafts at one of her hotels. She hoped that missionaries would be able to convert as many Native Americans as possible, reflecting toward the end of *A Summer* how pleasant it was when a region became civilized and its occupants came under Christ, rather than echoing with "savage war cries" (246).

Although their individual observations and the aspects of life in the West the four authors identified as their greatest areas of concern varied, each of them issued a call for other genteel women to come to the Great Lakes region. For example, in addition to her title, *A New Home, Who'll Follow?*, Kirkland noted in her book that "the silent influence of example is daily effecting much toward reformation in many particulars" (90), thereby reassuring her readers that she and other women of refinement were able to exert much-needed influence in the area simply through their presence in their respective communities. Farnham, in turn, praised the State of Illinois and regretted not addressing it more fully in *Life in Prairie Land*, writing about, "the housekeeping of this magnificent state, in the education she is giving her children, of their prospects" (104). As for Fuller, she urged her readers to consider the potential for the West, commenting in *Summer on the Lakes* that "…a new order, a new poetry is to be evoked from this chaos" (28). She indicated that genteel women could make a difference in helping to establish this "new order" out of the area's rusticity, noting in a poem she put at the very end of her book,

> If, undeterred, you to the fields must go,
> You tear your dresses and you scratch your hands;
> But, in the places where the berries grow,
> A sweeter fruit the ready sense commands.
> Of wild, gay feelings, fancies springing sweet—
> Of bird-like pleasures, fluttering and fleet. (255)

And Steele wrote that the West offered developing cities but also places where her target audience members could create a pastoral idyll, alluding to James Hillhouse's scriptural

poem *Hadad* in her comment,

> If you do not choose to emigrate to any of those charming spots I have mentioned along the road; if Auburn, or Rochester, or Cleveland do not lure you, perhaps you would like to come to the picturesque shores of St, Clair, and weave you a bower "in some sweet solitary nook" under those trees of "ancient beauty." (90)

In sum, the authors did not warn their peers to stay away from the West, but instead invited them to join them in the Great Lakes region as settlers or to follow in their footsteps as travelers. Ultimately, they encouraged genteel, progressive, and religious women to follow them to the prairie region to further its cultivation[4] and aid in its social and cultural development.

This project has considered the way genteel women viewed the Great Lakes region during a specific span of time, but it also serves as a starting point for additional research. Further scholarship on this topic should consider what few writings and recorded oral histories of American Indian women exist from this era, as well as the works from pioneers, as opposed to settlers. Both groups were displaced by the westward expansion of the United States and the successive waves of development that occurred region by region. For American Indians in the Upper Midwest, the advancement of settlers resulted in displacement and the inability to maintain their traditions and their way of life. As Black Hawk noted in his autobiography, *Life of Black Hawk*, when the United States military built a fort on Rock Island, he and his people "…were very sorry, as this was the best island on the Mississippi." He added, "It was our garden…" (87). Eventually, settlers occupied some of his peoples' lands and took over the cornfields (104-5). His mention of "garden" is striking. In a way, when Kirkland and others like her planted their gardens, their actions symbolically marked the completion of the displacement of the region's indigenous peoples. The American Indian gardens, their

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[4] As Kolodny argued in *A Land Before Her*, women viewed the West as a type of garden, in contrast to men, who viewed it as an area for conquest.

cultivated lands,[5] were the first things to go, and the genteel women's gardens were among the last things to arrive in the shift of the region from the domain of "savages" to that European-American settlements. Considering the works of American Indian women, especially those who were bi-cultural or married to European-Americans, could yield valuable insights.

Consideration of the additional published travel writings of Kirkland, Farnham, and Fuller and Steele's *Sovereigns of the Bible* might also illustrate in what ways the four authors' experiences in the West impacted them after they returned to the Northeast. Kirkland's and Farnham's relocation and the completion of Fuller's and Steele's journeys did not mark retrogrades, given the extraordinary lives Kirkland, Farnham, and Fuller led and Steele's continued support of the Home Mission Society and an additional published work of religious writing. After she was widowed, Farnham, for instance, became more involved with feminist activism and tried to persuade unmarried, genteel women to relocate to distant California with her, "…in the belief that marriageable women of good character were sorely needed to shape society on the mining frontier" (Hallwas Introduction xx-xxi). Her actions were not indicative of someone who "retreated" from the frontier of refinement to return back home. Kirkland and Fuller both had lives full of meaningful purpose, as well, after departing the Great Lakes region. Unfortunately, comparatively little is known about Steele's later life, but based on a description of her funeral, she was highly regarded in her hometown of Brooklyn Heights, New York (Wood 5).

While women's travel narratives published during this era (rather than decades

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[5] Black Hawk earlier described the crops of "corn, beans, pumpkins, and squashes" the Sauk women raised (89). Later, he specifically mentioned the problems his people encountered planting their corn, writing, "In consequence of the improvements of the intruders on our fields, we found considerable difficulty to get ground to plant a little corn" (107). As Thomas Forsyth notes in "Manners and Customs of the Sauk and Fox Nations of Indians," the Sauk "…practiced agriculture on an extensive scale" (190). For Black Hawk's people, the appropriation of their "garden" by European-American settlers was a displacement from the lands where they raised the vegetable crops that sustained them, in addition to fishing and hunting.

later) are few, works such as Catharine Stewart's *New Homes in the* West, an account of her journeys from Chicago down the Galena River in the mid-1830s that was published in 1843, might prove useful. Furthermore, since the settlement of other parts of the Great Lakes region occurred earlier than in Illinois and Michigan, considering women's travel writings about these regions from the mid-1830s to the mid-1840s could yield evidence of the ways gentility and refinement influenced social change. Another thing to consider is that while some people were striving to ensure the society and culture of the region aligned with the Northeast, others wished for the region to continue to allow for greater independence and freedom. Any published settler narratives written by pioneer women who relocated two times or more westward could provide insight into lower- or middle-class views of the frontier, to allow for consideration of people who did not strive to refine the West. Given the present-day Upper Midwest has a character that is distinct from that of the Northeast, competing influences might number among various factors that have contributed to what makes the Great Lakes region unique.

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